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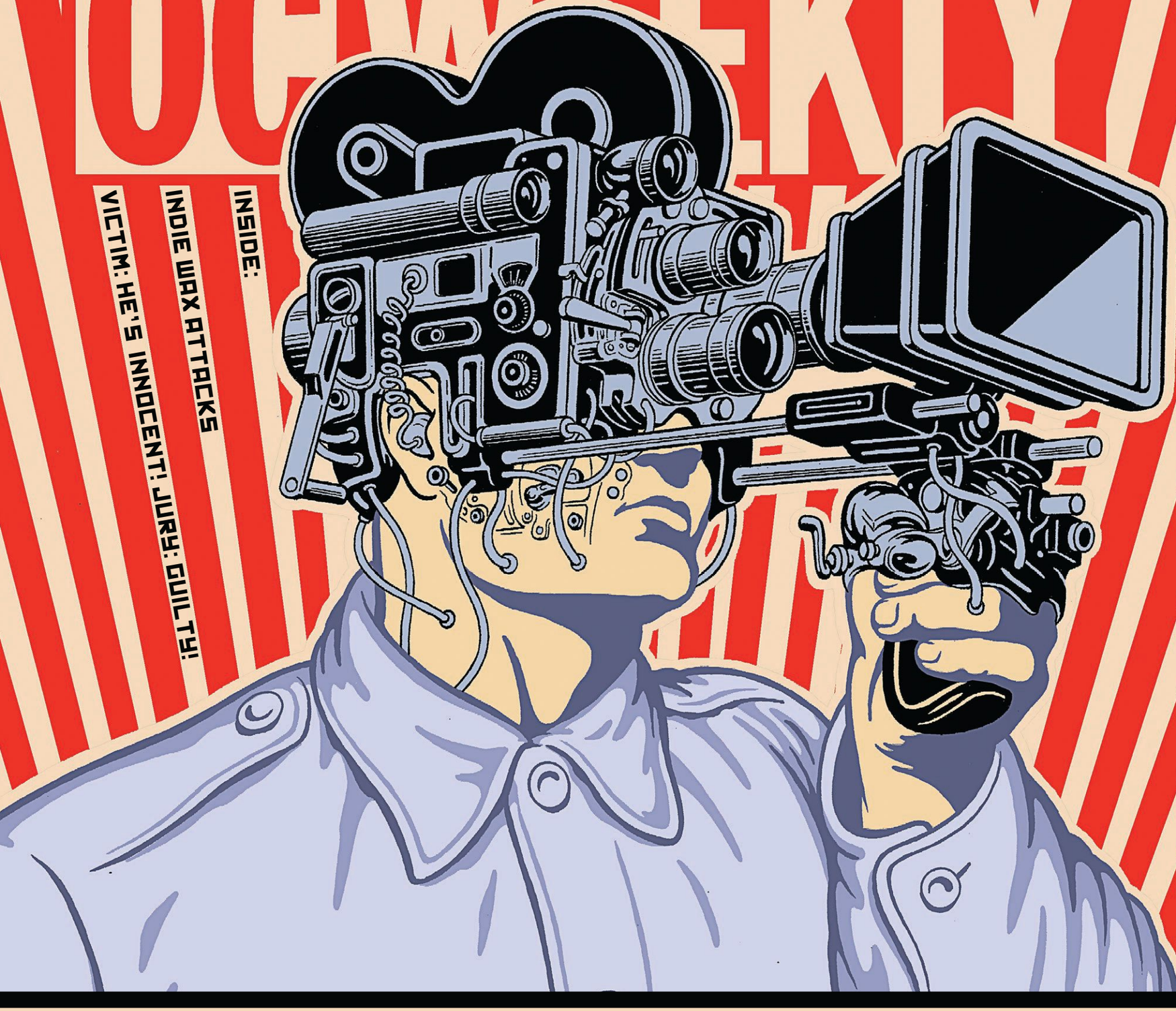

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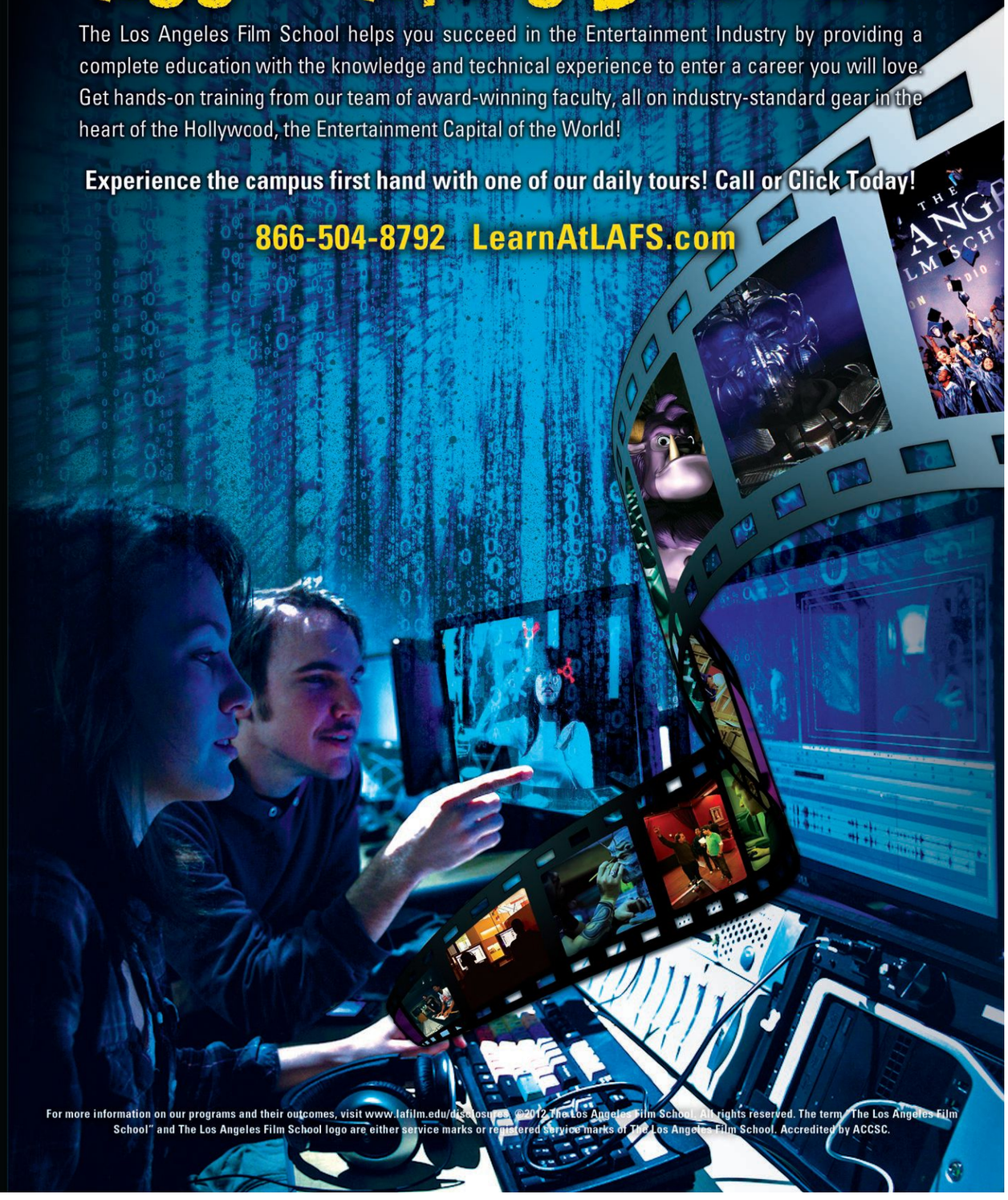

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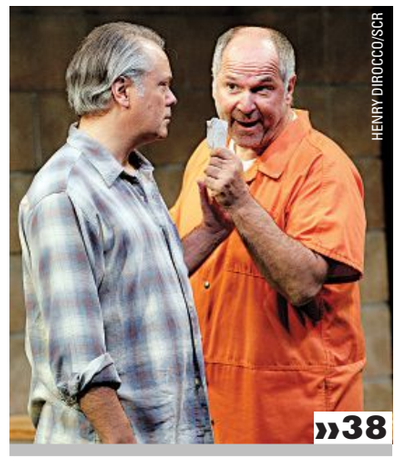
JOHANNES DEWALD

up front

06 THE COUNTY
Every gang member is guilty of something, right? That must explain why Ramiro Alex Huerta will die in prison for a crime the victim says he didn't commit, reports R. Scott Moxley. According to Josh Dulaney, the Mass comes silent but deadly at OC's Anglican Catholic Church. Why do lowriders drive cars with tiny steering wheels? Gustavo Arellano has the answer in this week's ¡Ask a Mexican!

12 FEATURE
On April 26, the Newport Beach Film Festival begins its 13th consecutive run. Waiting is for peons. Matt Coker is not a peon. He's seen all the films, so suck on that. Actually, he hasn't. He's seen some of them. The good ones, we think. Read his fine feature package on the festival and find out for yourself.



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in back

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In this corner, His Holiness the Dalai Lama . . . and in this corner, a 420 festival . . . Let's get it on!

25 FOOD
Edwin Goei learns that despite its name, Mil Jugos doesn't actually serve 1,000 juices, but damn, the ones it does serve are good. Who says Mission Viejo has the best little Persian market in all of OC? Arellano does, that's who. Five Crowns chef Ryan O'Melveny Wilson stops cooking and answers some goddamn questions for Anne Marie Panoringan in this week's On the Line. Is the Spicy BBQ Chicken Pizza at San Giovanni Pizza really halal? Yasmin Nouh finds out in Eat This Now. And Dave Lieberman wonders why Lágrimas Negras From Ramuri Cerveza Artesanal is so damn hard to get. Now, stop asking so many questions!

33 FILM
In which Coker learns that he loves documentaries about Paul Simon's *Graceland* album and the hip-hop heroics of the Sugarhill Gang, while films about whiny hipsters who think they're not hipsters? Not so much.

38 CULTURE
What happens when you mix a wicked nice interpretation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with a bunch of hoopy mamalukes from Newton, Mass? You get *The Prince of Atlantis*, says Joel Beers. Michelle Woo just returned from a vacation in Japan, or at least so she thought until she discovered OC's new Daiso.

40 MUSIC
Record Store Day was supposed to save vinyl from history's non-recyclable bin. But Taylor Hamby discovers it helps if your store's name is Amoeba. Sarah Bennett checks in on the Growlers and asks why they suck so much—at slacking! And in Locals Only, Adam Lovinus tilts at some zombie windmills with Dead Quixote.

other stuff

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CHRISTOPHER VICTORIO

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Government 'Voodoo' Convicts OC Gangster

Ramiro Alex Huerta accuses officials of hiding exculpatory evidence from his jury

Armed with a fearsome scowl and standing at 6-foot-3 and 240 pounds, Orange County gangster Ramiro Alex Huerta is probably accustomed to people listening attentively when he speaks.

But Huerta, 38, can't get anybody to listen to him nowadays.

Following a 2008 attempted-murder conviction and longer-than-life prison sentence, he wants everyone to know he has been railroaded by the criminal-justice system, including dirty sheriff's deputies, conniving lawyers and callous judges.

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»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

Huerta—who goes by the moniker "Oso" (Spanish for "Bear") in the La Habra-based Monos criminal street gang—is incredulous because, he says, both the prosecutor and his own defense lawyer worked to convict him, a scenario he calls un-American. While inmates often make wild claims, this one has evidence behind it: Lawyers on both sides kept potentially key exculpatory information from the jury.

Jose Garcia, the alleged jailhouse-stabbing victim and a member of the Santa Ana-based F-Troop gang, insists Huerta and Carlos Luna, a co-defendant and a member of the Stanton-based Crow Village gang, are innocent. In fact, Garcia took the extraordinary step of sending Superior Court Judge M. Marc Kelly a letter exonerating the two defendants. But nobody called Garcia to testify at the trial.

When that scenario didn't bother a California appellate court, Huerta took his case to the federal judiciary. He sent officials a neatly handwritten complaint that blamed his attempted-murder and assault-with-a-deadly-weapon convictions on an inept defense lawyer and a win-at-all-costs prosecutor. Absent Garcia's testimony, he asserted that jurors had to rely on the word of two deputies, James Van Patten and Dale Clifton, who claim they witnessed the attack inside the Theo Lacy Jail.

But Huerta insists the deputies fabricated the story. He said the allegedly intended murder weapon, a shank, was never found. He also noted this eyebrow-raising issue: According to the Orange County Sheriff's Department, jail-surveillance video that could have supported the officers' story "began malfunctioning" at the time of the incident.

Not calling Garcia to testify, failing to recover a weapon and claiming a mysteriously missing video are "red flags" that signal the "unreliability of the process" that permanently robbed him of his freedom, argued Huerta.

This month, U.S. District Court Judge R. Gary Klausner, a George W. Bush appointee to the bench, received the findings of Jean P. Rosenbluth, a reviewing magistrate and former federal prosecutor in Los Angeles. Acknowledging her interpretation of the evidence tilted to favor the government, Rosenbluth wasn't the least bit suspicious of the video-malfunction excuse that's routinely employed following complaints of deputy wrongdoing. She accepted the jail deputies' stories as gospel.

To Huerta's immense frustration, Rosenbluth also seemed to sanction the notion it was legally fair the jury never heard Garcia's exculpatory testimony because of a slippery-slope argument: The victim is a gang member, and gang members lie; therefore Huerta must be guilty if a fellow gangster says he's innocent.

Rosenbluth concluded that nothing in the conviction had been "unreasonable."

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"It would be an understatement to say that short shrift was given to [my] claims," Huerta wrote after reviewing Rosenbluth's recommendations. "This is actually offensive to traditional justice in America. No need for defense witnesses? No need for citizen jurors to determine material facts. Voodoo and the government's Ouija board will suffice?"

Without adding his own explanation, Klausner sided with Rosenbluth. The ruling has stark consequences for Huerta. After he spends the rest of his life in prison and dies, he'll still owe two additional years of incarceration.

Sadly, Huerta's experience is hardly unique. Earlier this month, I wrote about Jesus Arturo Aguirre, an 18-year-old Eastside Buena Park gangster who got a life-in-prison sentence on April 6 for his secondary role as a 16-year-old in a 2010 attempted murder of a rival hoodlum, who—as in Huerta's case—insisted Aguirre was innocent.

RAPIST ANAHEIM COP DEMANDS NEW TRIAL

Bradley Stewart Wagner, the Anaheim police officer who targeted three illegal immigrants near Disneyland for violent sexual assaults while on duty, is nothing if not persistent. This week, Wagner—who managed to stall his criminal case for more than five years—sent his criminal defense lawyer to the California Court of Appeal in Santa Ana with hopes of overturning the generous four-year prison sentence he negotiated in a 2010 plea bargain.

Farah F. Azar, the most recent of at least four defense lawyers who've represented Wagner, told a three-justice panel that Superior Court Judge Walter P. Schwarm violated the dirty cop's constitutional rights by ignoring overwhelming evidence that Wagner had been exceptionally high on prescription drugs in court when he agreed to the plea deal.

"At the time of the pleas, he was under the influence," Azar said. "Courts must make sure when a defendant enters a plea, he knows what he [is] doing. . . . [Wagner had] consumed mind-altering drugs, [and] we submit there was an abuse of [the judge's] discretion [by not voiding the guilty plea]."

But Deputy Attorney General Karl T. Terp reminded the justices that Wagner, who is housed at the California Institution for Men in Chino, has repeatedly raised and lost the same argument [see "Mr. Wagner (Finally) Goes to Prison," Dec. 22, 2010]. After the cop signed the plea deal that chopped seven years off the maximum potential prison punishment and acknowledged in writing that he wasn't under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Schwarm spoke one-on-one with him. In the judge's view, Wagner "appeared to be cognizant," said Terp.

Azar also blasted Jennifer Keller, Wagner's lawyer at the time of the plea deal. She accused Keller, one of the county's most prominent defense lawyers, of professional misconduct for not adequately explaining to Wagner the consequences of being labeled a sexually violent predator, a designation that could keep him incarcerated beyond the four-year term. Keller's performance violated her "duty-bound" oath, according to Azar.

Terp said the appellate court should reject Wagner's complaints because neither the judge nor his lawyer saw signs of intoxication. He noted that the cop submitted a "fabricated" doctor's letter to bolster his intoxication claims and faked ignorance of the criminal laws. "It defies logic for Wagner, veteran cop on the verge of retiring, to say he had no knowledge of the sexual violent predator [statute]."

With Wagner's wife scribbling circles on a legal pad while sitting in the audience, Azar made one last attempt before Justice Kathleen O'Leary cut her off for rambling.

"He was ready to go to trial," Azar said. "He wanted a trial. Let's go to trial. That's all we're asking. My client is innocent. . . . He didn't have a reasonable understanding [of] what was happening."

The appellate court will issue its opinion in the coming months.

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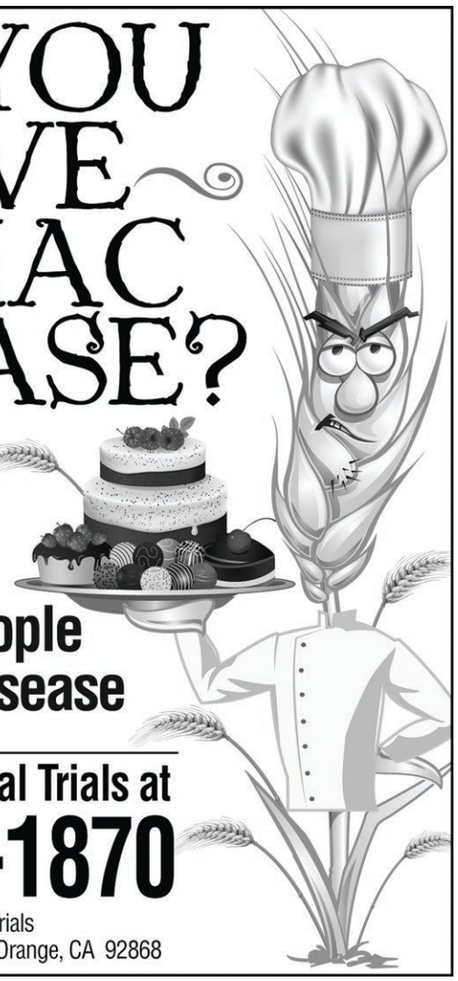

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DEAR MEXICAN: Why do Mexicans with lowriders have murals on their hoods and trunks/tailgates? And how come they always have waterfalls and half-naked chicks as part of the mural?

The Crazy Filipino

DEAR *CHINITO*: First off, *gracias* for not telling the tired lowrider joke that goes like this: "Why do Mexicans drive lowriders? So they can cruise and pick strawberries at the same time." Or "Why do Mexicans drive cars with small steering wheels? So they can drive while wearing handcuffs." All jokes aside, the use of murals on lowriders is further proof of Mexican assimilation into this country. The art, of course, comes from Mexico's proud muralist tradition, which you see in Mexican neighborhoods across America. Their placement on cars comes from kustom kulture, born in Southern California and freely mixing with Mexican traditions from the 1950s onward. Half-naked chicks? Like you have to ask! And, frankly, Mexicans cannot stand to see any flat surface unadorned, whether it's with a mural, graffiti, *quinceañera* pictures, Virgins of Guadalupe or the occasional college diploma.

DEAR MEXICAN: What's the deal with Mexicans and scratch-off lottery tickets? Is it the lure of the instant gratification of the $2 return on their $10 investment, or is it because they're afraid immigration might be waiting outside the office when they try to cash the Lotto ticket? Honestly, it has been years since I've seen anyone but Mexicans buying those sorry excuses for a gambling opportunity.

Learn Other Temptations

DEAR *GABACHO*: The only comprehensive survey involving the racial and ethnic demographics of lottery players is one compiled by the University of Houston's Hobby Center for Public Policy. In its 2010 report, it found that while the percentage of Hispanics who played scratch-off lotto tickets didn't vary significantly from *gabachos* (55.6 percent of Mexis surveyed played, while a whopping 72.2 percent of *negritos* did the same), the median amount of dollars spent per month by Mexis was much higher than everyone else: $8.50, as opposed to five bucks for *gabachos y negritos* alike. The Hobby Center's study unfortunately didn't offer any explanation for the discrepancy, although other lottery researchers have determined that Mexis prefer scratch-off tickets because of the low cost and easy availability in convenience stores. Wish I had a rejoinder to that, so instead I'll offer another lowrider joke: "What did the lowrider say when the house fell on him? Get off me, homes!"

CONFIDENTIAL TO: The Albuquerque idiot who has called libraries and bookstores where I've been doing signings, demanding they cancel my events because my column is supposedly racist. *Pendejo*, if the Anti-Defamation League laughed you off, you think anyone else is going to take you seriously? The only people who want this column gone are Know Nothings and neo-Nazis. Become a productive member of society: Buy many copies of my books and donate them to the underground libraries being set up by the Librotraficante (www.librotraficante.com), who gladly traffics in my *libros* and those of other seditious writers. And then go get a blowjob.

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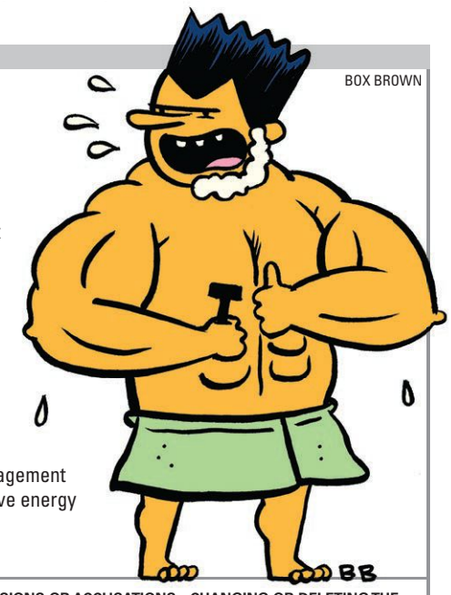
HEY YOU!

» ANONYMOUS

Mop Jock

You're the muscled meathead who went on a vicious verbal rampage at the hapless employee at our Costa Mesa gym because he accidentally swiped your foot with his mop while cleaning the men's locker room as you were shaving. Even though the guy was a full foot shorter than you, it looked as though he could still kick your ass every way to Sunday. He politely apologized, but you still went off on him. I'd lay off the steroids a bit, pal, and hope management doesn't ban you from returning. Your negative energy soured my entire workout. Thanks.



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He Who Hath Denied It, Supplied It

Breaking bread—and wind—at OC's Anglican Catholic Church

The Lord's timing is incredible. Just as the OCeeker hit a sabbath in his P90X program, he took in a **Mass** and healing service on a recent Wednesday morning at **St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Catholic Church** in Orange, where, with all the kneeling, sitting and standing, he got in some core work while his sins were washed away.

Indeed, while the OCeeker was confusing his muscles, one thing was clear: Father **Neil Edlin**, the parish's rector, kicks some mass!

The OCeeker arrived just as Edlin—a fine-looking (but married, ye lusty-eyed Delilahs) young man with dark brown eyes and brown locks that framed a chiseled face—was reading from **Acts 3:19**: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

With only an elderly couple and one elderly woman in attendance, the OCeeker had plenty of room in which to repent, choosing among 20 brown, wooden pews. They were parted in the middle, atop a tile floor, with red carpet forming the aisle.

Upon the white walls hung little emblems of the 14 stations of the cross, showing **Jesus Christ**'s condemnation to death. One of the them was titled ***Veronica*** (supposedly the gal who had a 12-year blood hemorrhage healed by Christ), and dagnabbit, the OCeeker couldn't get that **Elvis Costello** song out of his pomade-anointed head.

Edlin conducted the mass in his white, priestly garb, leading the flock of four through the service as he stood before eight candles, two of which were lit. Jesus hung out on a wooden cross above the candles. Stained glass flanked the stage, from which Edlin worked his liturgical magic, preparing the communion elements, waving holy things, and leading the believers in the reading of confessions and creeds.

The Anglican church holds to the sacraments and the ministry of bishops, deacons and priests. It often is portrayed as a hybrid of **Roman Catholicism** and **Protestantism**, and today, the **Anglican Communion** consists of Anglican churches around the world, with the **Church of England** as the mothership.

For a garden-variety Protestant who hasn't had to sit through years of Masses, the Mass was a refreshing diversion from the let's-make-this-up-as-we-go-along worship services that are conducted by America's rock-star pastors.

Basically, we read from a prayer book, which told us when to kneel, when to stand, when to say "amen," what to say in response to Edlin, and when to perform the sign of the cross or flash "**West Side 4 Life**."

Edlin read from **John 21**, in which

OCeeker
»JOSH DULANEY

Jesus appeared to the disciples for the third time after his resurrection, preparing a meal of fish and bread on the shore of the **Sea of Galilee**.

Then we read the **Creed** (standing); Edlin offered thanksgiving to God; we prayed for the universal church (kneeling); we gave the **General Confession** (kneeling); received absolution (kneeling); heard the **Comfortable Words** (kneeling); and consecrated ourselves for communion (kneeling). The OCeeker cheated a little, faking a kneel or two while really just leaning forward in the pew.

Just when he thought the Mass was going off without a hitch, right before Edlin read the words "take, eat, this my body," the OCeeker heard a curious sound a-rumblin' from the old couple. Goodgawdalmighty, it was that of flatulence, perhaps what a psalmist would describe as "a joyful noise unto the **Lord**."

While someone broke wind, Edlin never broke stride, all the way up to communion, at which time the OCeeker "walked that aisle" as though he were **Ric Flair**, then kneeled at the altar, ready to be served up some forgiveness. Taking his place among the aged saints, the OCeeker received his wafer and a blessing from Edlin, then slurped some holy hooch from a golden chalice as the pastor passed it from parishioner to parishioner.

We moseyed back to the pews, then gave **The Thanksgiving** (kneeling), followed by **The Gloria** (standing), followed by the **Final Blessing** (kneeling).

Then it was time for some unction for the sick. Unction junction, what's your function? Welp, that's anointing the sick with oil and praying for their healing. So up to the altar the OCeeker went again.

"I anoint thee with oil," Edlin said, rubbing the healing balm upon the OCeeker's forehead.

We then dawdled back to the pews for the **Final Blessing** (kneeling).

Afterward, Edlin introduced himself to the OCeeker (standing). He seems like a real nice guy!

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This column originally appeared on our news blog, Navel Gazing, at ocweekly.com.

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REEL LIFE

THE NEWPORT BEACH FILM FESTIVAL SEEKS ITS PLACE IN A BIG, BAD WORLD

BY MATT COKER

Think back to when you were 13—or, if you're 13, think back to now. Slurping life juice from mama's teat is a faded memory. Volcanic puss lumps are forming in places guaranteed to ruin your class picture. Hormones go jibbity-jibbity-jibbity because the opposite-sex-cooties plague is no more.

The Newport Beach Film Festival's 13th annual run opens Thursday, April 26, and like any 13-year-old, the cinestravaganza is starting to look beyond the playground to the big, bad world out there. After hanging out with a Rainbow Coalition of film-festival friends at Toronto, Sundance and even stuck-up Palm Springs, "Newps," as the cool kids call it, is now programming more documentaries and features about war, pollution, poverty, immigration and profound technological change than ever before. Many of the more than 400 films from 50 countries showing through May 3 in Newps and Costa Mesa involve youths coming of age.

"We're proud of what we've achieved in 13 years," says Gregg Schwenk, the festival's CEO and co-founder, at his busy offices across from John Wayne Airport. "We have built a reputation with filmmakers and studios. We have shown we have the ability to deliver, and that has given us greater access to films."

After the traditional red-carpet arrivals at Newport Center, Schwenk will officially open the 2012 festival in front of the Big Newport screen just before the scheduled 7:30 p.m., world-premiere screening of *Jewtopia*. Based on the off-Broadway smash hit of the same name and described as a Jewish *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Jewtopia* follows a young Jewish American marrying another and dispensing advice to his gentile buddy who has the hots for a Jewish girl. Ivan Sergei, Joel David Moore, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Jon Lovitz, Rita Wilson and Tom Arnold star.

As always, the opening-night gala blowout follows outdoors at Fashion Island with entertainment, Absolut vodka, tastings from 35 local restaurants, more Absolut, fashions, and make it a triple, bartender. More parties follow Spotlight films. The 2012 festival screens 16 world premieres (not counting those among the 180 short films), including the May 3 closer *Shanghai Calling*, which opens the 2012 Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival seven nights later. It's about a New York attorney who finds himself embroiled in a business mess in Shanghai that a beautiful relocation specialist and her eclectic contacts help him unravel. Daniel Henney, Eliza Coupe and Bill Paxton star in writer/director Daniel Hsia's feature debut. After the 7:30 p.m. Lido Theatre screening, a closing-night gala follows in Via Lido Plaza.

New this year is an "online festival," which posts digital versions of select motion pictures on the web, more repeat screenings for films that quickly sell out, and expanded final-night programming. Island Cinemas, which underwent remodeling last year, and the historic Port Theatre return as venues along with Big Newport, Lido Theatre, Starlight Cinemas of Triangle Square in Costa Mesa, the Newport Beach Public Library, Orange County Museum of Art, the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center, and Sage Hill High School, home of a collegiate showcase. For complete details on all films, passes, individual tickets, theater locations and more, visit NewportBeachFilmFest.com.

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MAGELA CROSIGNANI

MOSQUITA Y MARI

The Social Network

A curated sample of socially relevant offerings at the 2012 Newport Beach Film Festival

BY MATT COKER

One asterisk (*) next to a title indicates that film is highly recommended. All other descriptions are based on information provided by filmmakers and/or festival programmers.

A FIERCE GREEN FIRE * The National Society of Film Critics named Mark Kitchell's *Berkeley In the Sixties* the Best Documentary of 1990; that film was also nominated for an Oscar. Fastforward two decades, and Kitchell has another excellent film that expertly blends period music, archival footage and reflective modern-day interviews. Broken up into five parts to reflect that many decades of eco-activism, *A Fierce Green Fire* covers the conservation movement that sprung up in the 1960s through today's global concerns about climate change, rainforest destruction and the need for a sustainable future. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 28, 3:30 p.m.; May 3, 5 p.m.*

THE ATOMIC STATES OF AMERICA A "Nuclear Renaissance" was born in 2010 when the United States announced the first new nuclear-power-plant con-

struction in more than 32 years. Then came the 9.0 magnitude earthquake that hit Japan on March 11, 2011, and the subsequent meltdown of the plant in Fukushima. With radiation from that event now turning up in kelp beds off the Orange County coast, this documentary from co-directors Don Argott and Sheena Joyce could not be more timely. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 29, 4 p.m.; at Island Cinemas, May 1, 4 p.m.*

BEAT DOWN From Canada comes director Deanne Foley's film of a headstrong teenage girl who wants to follow her father's footsteps into professional wrestling. Dad, who retired from the ring, objects, so his daughter turns to his bitter rival for guidance. At least she isn't on the pole, Papa. *At Island Cinemas, April 27, 6:30 p.m.; at Starlight Cinemas, May 1, 3:30 p.m.*

BITTER SEEDS * Provocative Bay Area filmmaker Micha X. Peled completes his Globalization Trilogy (2005's *China Blue* and 2001's *Store Wars: When Wal-Mart Comes to Town*) with this compelling documentary that makes the case that Monsanto is complicit in the suicides of farmers every half-hour in India. The focus is on a young woman and budding journalist whose farmer father killed himself and her uncle, another desperate cotton farmer. The American chemical giant's genetically modified seeds are at the root of evil in this heartbreaking, infuriating and all-too-common story. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 28, 8 p.m.; at Island Cinemas, April 30, 4 p.m.*

BROKEN KINGDOM Writer/director Daniel Gillies stars and directs his wife, Rachael Leigh Cook, in this indie drama about the intersecting lives of two sets of people: a Hollywood writer and 14-year-old prostitute from Bogota, Colombia, and an LA day-care teacher and Colombian university student. The 2010 film makes its West Coast premiere here. *At Island Cinemas, April 28, 8:15 p.m.; at Starlight Cinemas, May 1, 4:15 p.m.*

5 BROKEN CAMERAS * A Palestinian farmer attempts to chronicle his village's nonviolent resistance to the Israeli army and illegal settlements, but dang if soldiers or settlers don't keep breaking his cameras. Fortunately, Emad Burnat, who gets the co-directing credit for this documentary with Guy Davidi, manages to collect fascinating footage that is presented chronologically, in the order each camera was destroyed. Included are moments of family joy, a wife's concern that her husband/videographer will get himself killed and dubious shootings of unarmed Palestinians. *At Island Cinemas, April 28, 4:30 p.m.; At Starlight Cinemas, April 30, 3:45 p.m.*

GUILTY * Vincent Garenq's gritty look at real French injustice is told through the sad eyes of Alain Marécaux (Phillippe Torreton), a bailiff who, along with his wife and a dozen others, is falsely accused of raping kids. You feel an innocent's pain and share a nation's indignation. *At Island Cinemas, April 29, 4 p.m.; May 2, 3:30 p.m.*

HIGH GROUND Since the passing of Roy Disney, Don Hahn has taken over hosting the festival's popular Disney Rarities program, which returns for a fifth year. But the Oscar-nominated producer of *The Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* also manages to work into the lineup a documentary of his own, such as 2010's *Hand Held* or this year's look at 11 injured war veterans who heal their emotional and physical wounds by scaling a Himalayan peak. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 29, 6 p.m.*

I WISH Director of Programming Erik Forssell is high on this Japanese Spotlight feature from Kore-eda Hirokazu, whose love story between a video store clerk and blow-up doll, *Air Doll*, was a hit at the 2010 festival. *I Wish* is about a 12-year-old boy who lives with his mother in one city devising a plan with his little brother who resides with his father in another town to magically reunite the family. "It's a touching look at children and divorce," Forssell says. *At Big Newport, April 30, 7:30 p.m.*

ICE DRAGON Mick, 11, sets off for a new foster home. Along the way, he encounters an ice dragon, owns a cat factory, befriends two brothers and falls in love for the first time. Martin Hogdahl and Håkan Bjerkings' Swedish fantasy is a Spotlight Film making its U.S. premiere. *At Lido, May 1, 8:30 p.m.*

KINGDOM COME Directors Paiman Kalayeh and John Lyons Murphy use Daniel Gillies' experiences as a first-time director (see *Broken Kingdom*, above) to flesh out the perils of independent filmmaking. Mark Ruffalo, Seth Green and Tim Roth also share their indie experiences. *At Port Theatre, April 28, 5 p.m.*

LAST CALL AT THE OASIS Water plays a vital role in our daily lives so, naturally, we ignore it. We won't for long. Festival filmmaker alum Jessica Yu (2004's *In the Realms of the Unreal* and 2008's *Ping Pong Playa*) returns with an examination of the global water crisis featuring Erin Brockovich, UC Irvine Earth Science Systems professor James S. Famiglietti, and Macarthur Fellow and Pacific Institute co-founder Peter Gleick. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 27, 6 p.m.; April 30, 5:45 p.m.*

LITTLE DANCER Amanda Salazar, the festival's associate director of programming, uses the words "amazing" and "bizarre" to describe George Jecel's Serbian feature about beautiful young dancer Tatjiana, who falls in love with a local gypsy boy and gets accepted to a

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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REEL LIFE

SEXY BABY

» FROM PAGE 13

prestigious dance academy—just as her father considers selling her to a gangster so he can open a restaurant. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 30, 5:45 p.m.; at Island Cinemas, May 3, 3:15 pm.*

LOVE FREE OR DIE America's debate on gays in the clergy is played out through road trips Pastor Gene Robinson, the first openly gay person to become a bishop in the historic traditions of Christendom, makes to small towns, London's Lambeth Palace and even Orange County. *At Island Cinemas, April 27, 4:30 p.m.; at Starlight Cinemas, May 1, 4 p.m.*

MAGIC CAMP Obsessed kids congregate where they can be themselves, Tannen's Magic Camp, in Judd Ehrlich's doc, making its world premiere. The kids discover winning the camp's prestigious competition requires more than just sleight of hand. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 28, 3 p.m.; at Island Cinemas, May 3, 3:30 p.m.*

MOSQUITA Y MARI Max Naylor, the festival's senior programmer, steered me into *Trollhunter*, one of my favorite films at Newport last year, so when he says of Aurora Guerrero's feature drama making its world premiere, "This is my favorite film in the festival," my ears perk up. It follows two Latina teens in Highland Park who are on two different tracks: one to college, the other possibly to prison. They forge a friendship that turns into something deeper. *At Starlight Cinemas, April 27, 5 p.m.; at Island Cinemas, May 2, 4 p.m.*

MY WAY This year's Korean Spotlight film is said to be gory, graphic and that country's answer to *Saving Private Ryan*. Director Kang Je-gyu presents two childhood friends who have been rivals because both want to be successful athletes and one is Korean and the other is Japanese. The two later find themselves on opposite sides of a World War II battlefield. Will the bonds of brotherhood save them? *At Big Newport, April 30, 7:15 p.m.*

ROBOT AND FRANK Jake Schreier's feature was a favorite at Sundance, where veteran actor Frank Langella's performance was especially lauded. The story, set in the near future, involves the grown kids of a retired cat burglar getting him a humanoid robot programmed to improve his physical and mental health. The old man has other plans for the box of bolts, however. *At Island Cinemas, April 29, 8:30 p.m.; at Big Newport, May 3, 8 p.m.*

SEXY BABY* This startling documentary follows a 12-year-old girl in Manhattan, a former porn star in Florida and a Georgia peach undergoing vaginal reconstruction. Sex, body issues and the allure of the va-jay-jay are handled graphically but tastefully by co-directors Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus. You'll want to leave the kids at home for this West Coast premiere, but afterward, you'll be wondering what the hell they were up to while you were gone. *At Island Cinemas, April 28, 6:15 p.m.*

SHANGHAI CALLING Writer/director Daniel Hsia's feature debut makes its world premiere as the festival's closing-night film and its Pacific Rim Spotlight feature. A New York attorney (Daniel Henney) engulfed in a business misadventure in Shanghai relies on a beautiful relocation specialist and her eclectic contacts to help him save his career, find love and become enamored with his foreign surroundings. *At Lido, May 3, 7:30 p.m.*

THE WAR AROUND US * Al Jazeera's Ayman Mohyeldin, an American who now works for NBC News, and his colleague Sherine Tadros were the only Western reporters on the ground in the Gaza Strip when Isreal dropped bombs on Palestinians in 2008. A great look at war reporting, the documentary also shows firsthand what riled up the so-called "Irvine 11" at UC Irvine in February 2010. *At Island Cinemas, April 29, 6 p.m.; May 3, 4 p.m.*

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OC OD Tsunami

That's how *Behind the Orange Curtain* describes a prescription-drug 'epidemic' killing local kids

BY MATT COKER

Apologies for the macabre opening, but the documentary *Behind the Orange Curtain* was born out of the deaths of Jarrod Barber and Mark Melkonian, South County teens who succumbed to drug overdoses. Barber, 19, drifted away on the family couch in Laguna Niguel on Jan. 8, 2010, after a cocktail of Opana, a narcotic painkiller; Seroquel, an anti-psychotic; and Clonazepam, an anti-convulsant often used to treat anxiety. Melkonian was a 17-year-old junior at Dana Hills High School when he overdosed on prescription pills on May 25 of that same year.

Friends and loved ones have been obliged to keep memories of both teens alive through various South County anti-drug projects that have coalesced into the feature-length documentary *Behind the Orange Curtain*, which makes its world premiere at the Newport Beach Film Festival; it's first screening sold out so quickly a second was added in the 1,130-seat Big Newport theater.

The film explores what executive producer Natalie Costa, in her mile-a-minute Jersey accent, calls "the Orange County tsunami": young people of relative affluence dying after getting hooked on prescription medications such as those Barber ingested as well as Oxycontin, Oxymorphine, Ativan, Adderall and Klonopin.

How easily dangerous drugs find themselves into the mouths of babes who were not prescribed them is an overarching theme. Peer pressure and rave culture are fleshed out as possible gateways. The pharmaceutical industry's flooding of prescription pills into society, the "dirty doctor system" that often allows those medications to reach addicts and legislative efforts to hopefully stem the flow are all explored onscreen.

The project began when Christine Brant and Jarrod Barber's mother, Jodi, walked into the Performer's Academy, Costa's Laguna Hills acting, dancing and modeling school. The pair wanted Costa's help in making a video for Red Ribbon Week, the drug-and-alcohol-awareness program in local schools. Costa knew Brant through the passing of Melkonian, a gregarious student and athlete whose friends included both women's daughters. The first dead body Brianne Costa saw was her childhood friend Melkonian's; it was in his casket. Barber was known to Costa as a grieving local mom who put up posters around South County with pictures of her son and 18 other young overdose victims.

As the three women talked about the project, Costa realized this was more than a one-off video played at a school assembly. She envisioned a short film, and because her academy's faculty includes filmmakers, she immediately thought of Brent Huff as the perfect director. He has numerous Hollywood film and television acting, writing and directing credits, as does Zac Titus, who was enlisted to produce and co-write with Huff.

> "Any mother can take her daughter out to lunch, but when I'm dead and gone, she'll be able to say, 'My mother took me to the morgue.'"

NATALIE COSTA WITH HER FILM CREW

The filmmakers, with Costa and Barber in tow, began trolling South County schools for subjects. That's when, Costa says, "the floodgates opened with parents telling us how they lost a child." Some even had a second currently hooked on drugs. Many addicts started on prescription pills before moving to heroin, which produces the same high for less money.

"What blew me away was I'm a parent in the know, a hip kind of parent, and I had no idea this was taking place right under our noses," Costa says. "This is happening in gated communities, at blue-ribbon schools, at Orange County's famous churches, on our well-known athletic teams. Kids who, living here, have a leg up are dropping dead like flies from prescription medication."

It was decided a feature-length film was required to tells this South County story that resonates nationally. Having sunk $10,000 of her own money into the project, Costa turned to Kickstarter, an online resource that solicits donations for creative endeavors. That more than quadrupled the *Behind the Orange Curtain* budget.

"It was sort of a miracle," Costa says. "For $56,000, to have such a really well-done film is unheard of."

The additional funding allowed the project to move beyond interviews with parents and siblings to include pastors, physicians, first responders, interventionists, CEOs of companies, directors of sober-living institutions and representatives of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Costa dragged along Brianne, whom the mother describes as "a good girl with no drug or alcohol problems," to the Orange County Coroner's office during filming. "Any mother can take her daughter out to lunch, but when I'm dead and gone, she'll be able to say, 'My mother took me to the morgue.'"

It was very eye- and nose-opening. Inside the beautiful building was a large room in which bodies are kept in bags that ruffle from blowing fans. "We will never be able to get that freezing cold and bleach smell out of our heads," Costs says.

Personnel had respectfully turned toe tags around so the deceased could not be identified on film, but looking at one body, Brianne Costa discovered it had belonged to someone she knew. At the exact moment she covered her mouth with her hand, a still camera snapped the horrified look of recognition washing over her face. That image is now on the *Behind the Orange Curtain* movie poster.

With no narration, just up-close interviews with those most rocked by young drug deaths, the film soberly brings the issue home.

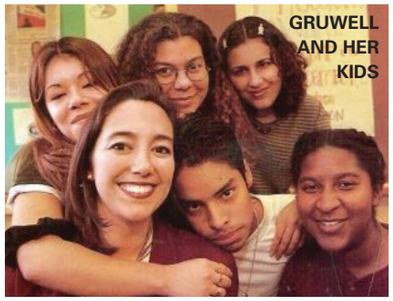
"Parents need to be aware that there but for the grace of God that could be your kids dying," Costa says emphatically. "All a child has to do is make one bad choice. These drugs do not discriminate. It could be Park Avenue or the park bench—they are one and the same. Open your mouth for one pill, and you could be in for the ride of your life."

BEHIND THE ORANGE CURTAIN
screens at Starlight Cinemas at Triangle Square, 1870 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-4300. May 2, 8:15 p.m.; and at Big Newport at Newport Center, 300 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 640-4600. May 3, 8:15 p.m.

The War At Home

Freedom Writers muse Erin Gruwell brings documentary *Stories From an Undeclared War* back to her old stomping grounds

BY MATT COKER



GRUWELL AND HER KIDS

Erin Gruwell graduated from Bonita High School in La Verne, but her undergrad studies took her to UC Irvine, and she later called Newport Beach home. She still recalls the "beautiful drive" along Pacific Coast Highway into Long Beach, where she would cut inland to reach her first teaching job at East Side LBC Woodrow Wilson High School in 1994.

"It was like two different worlds," Gruwell recalls from her north Long Beach home.

You likely know what happened next, thanks to her best-selling 1999 book, *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them*, and the 2007 feature film that spun out of the book, *Freedom Writers* with Hilary Swank.

A movie dearer to Gruwell's heart is the uplifting new documentary *Stories From an Undeclared War*, which screens as part of the Newport Beach Film Festival—much to the delight of the former resident.

It wasn't supposed to work out this way. She intended to go on and study law after UCI, but instead, she got the education bug and her master's from public-schools teacher factory known as Cal State Long Beach.

Hired to teach freshman English to so-called "at-risk" students who called the Springdale and Carmelita housing projects home, Gruwell was confronted by kids who "hated reading, they hated writing, and they hated each other. They hated me because I was so perky and annoying in my pearls. They thought, 'Who is this crazy lady from Newport Beach?' They wondered when I would run to the principal and ask to leave."

As we already know, Gruwell did not go anywhere. Directed by Dennis Rice, *Stories From an Undeclared War* shows Hollywood's *Freedom Writers* only tells part of the story.

We see students such as Maria Reyes, who arrived in class with an ankle monitor and a probation officer, openly hostile to Gruwell and the idea of reading and-writing. After striking out with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and the film *West Side Story*, Gruwell finally connects to Reyes and the rest with *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Wartime Sarajevo*. The experience led to the documentary's title; years earlier, student Darrius Garrett said, "You know what, Ms. G? I feel like we came from an undeclared war zone."

The teacher went the extra mile by arranging for her students to meet young author Zlata Filipovic at the Newport Beach Marriott. After the Freedom Writers graduated, Gruwell went the extra, extra miles by arranging for them to revisit Filipovic in Sarajevo and to stand in Anne Frank's loft in Amsterdam. Gruwell not only stretched her public-teacher's salary to the max, but also leaned on family and friends for various fund-raisers, taught nights at National University, sold bras at Fashion Island's Nordstrom and worked the concierge desk at the Newport Beach Marriott, convincing her managers to put up Filipovic.

"My kids had never been to Newport Beach or a fancy hotel," Gruwell recalls. "To watch them meet this little refugee, the author of an international best-seller and an advocate for free speech, changed their lives. Knowing that Anne Frank wrote what she wrote and Zlata wrote what she wrote made them not only want to write, but also to be advocates."

They got their chance in Washington, D.C. , where the students are shown in Gruwell's favorite part of the documentary interacting with then-President Bill Clinton's Education Secretary Richard Riley. "They just feel they are these civil-rights leaders," Gruwell says with pride.

Her students were not only the first members of their families to graduate from high school, but many also got college degrees, and some work for Gruwell's nonprofit Freedom Writers Foundation, which helps teachers and students around the country. "Now, these kids are role models," she says. "When I look back at it, they changed me. There is just this beautiful full circle from where they started and where they ended up."

Speaking of full circles, there's another reason she appreciates her two-decades-in-the-making "labor of love" screening in Newport Beach. She took her students to the Lido Theatre to see *Schindler's List* and *Hoop Dreams*. In case you were wondering, yes, some of those Freedom Writers will return to Newport Beach to support their former teacher's film and participate in an audience Q&A. Gruwell hopes the discussion spills into the lobby afterward.

"What I love about the documentary is it feels to me like a love letter to teachers, a love letter at a time in education when teachers have been beat up," she says. "I think our feature film, as well as the documentary, show how important it is to be a good teacher. The most important thing a teacher can do is give students a voice."

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

STORIES FROM AN UNDECLARED WAR **screens at Triangle Square, 1870 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-4300. April 29, 6 p.m.**

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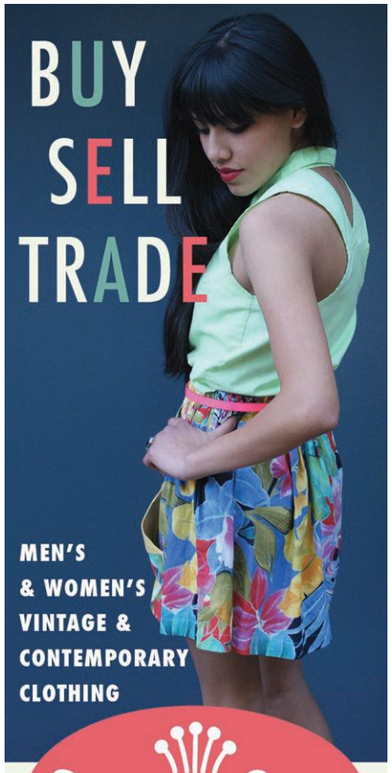

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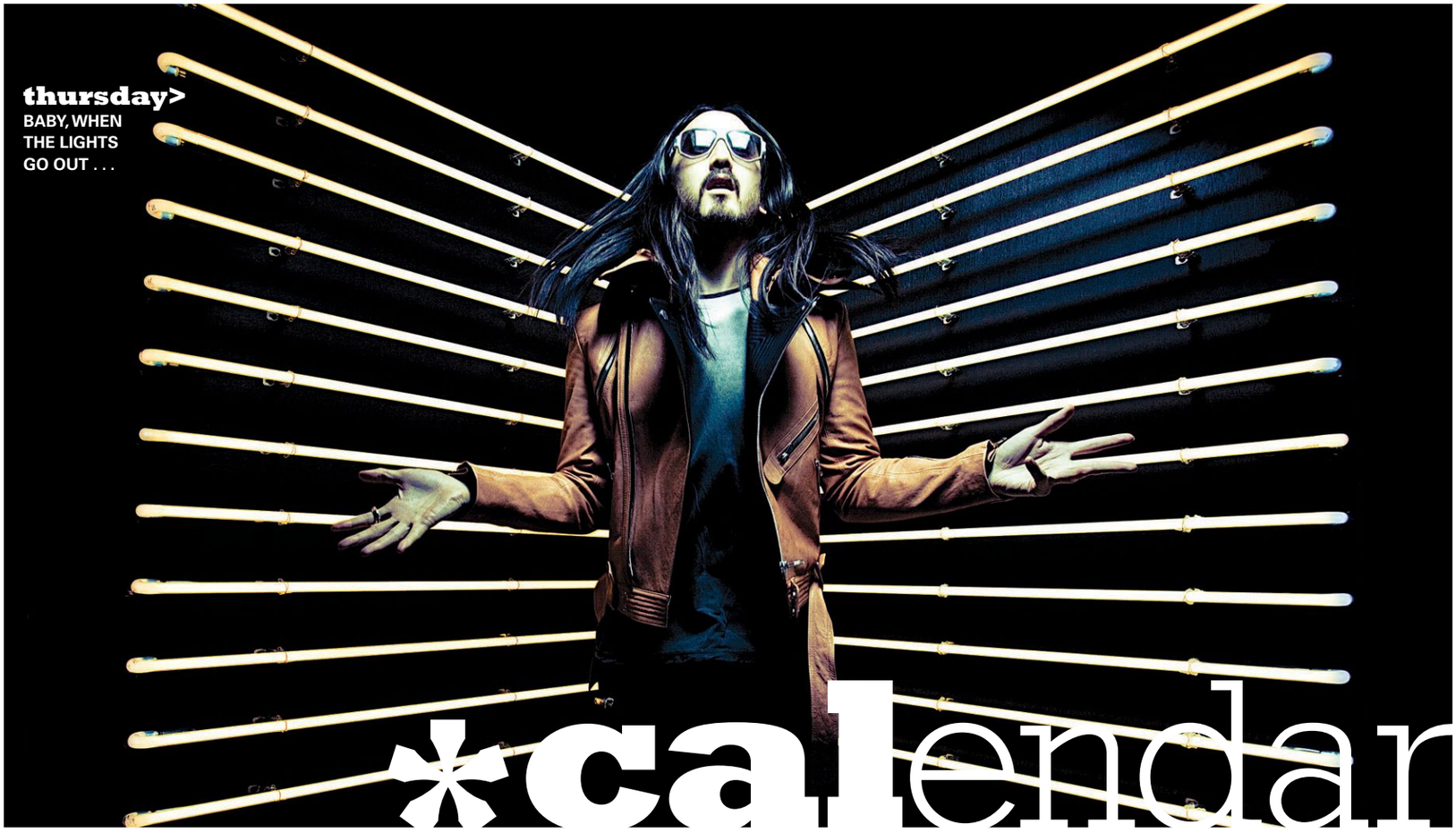

fri/04/20

[LIBATIONS]

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We haven't seen as impressive a lineup as this since 1972. That's when Larry Csonka was leaving bruises, blood and cleat marks on people and the Miami Dolphins were on their way to the NFL's only unbeaten season. *This* lineup is 80 or so wineries offering enough generous tastings to leave you, uh, sideways, plus an awesome array of samplings from some 30 restaurants and food purveyors. Things kick off tonight with a champagne reception and rare vino vintages at Dana Point Yacht Club; survivors and everyone else get to air it out at palm-tree-lined Doheny State Beach on Saturday. Word of warning: "Three sheets to the wind" at the yacht club may land you in the dock.

California Wine Festival at Dana Point Yacht Club, 24399 Dana Point Dr., Dana Point; www.californiawinefestival.com. 6:30 p.m.; also Sat. $69-$200. 21+. —JACK GRIMSHAW

[FILM]

Deep End
Tim and Eric's Billion Dollar Movie

Not sure if "bathe," "wallow" or "gorge" is the appropriate method of experience for weaponized-comedy duo Tim and Eric, but *Billion Dollar Movie*—the story of some guys who make a movie, which costs $1 billion, and then the hell begins—is definitely not a film to be simply "watched." Maybe you thought Adult Swim was a pretty forgiving place for a couple of guys who'd like to sand the edges off the human mind, but *Billion Dollar Movie* revels in its R rating: blood, beards, swords, poop . . . it's quite a time. It got a slew of bad reviews, but there's something special about a movie that just jumps off a cliff screaming. With "special cast members" in attendance—SHRIM!?—this is going to be an over-the-edge kind of night.

Tim and Eric's Billion Dollar Movie at the Long Beach Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435; arttheatrelongbeach.com. Midnight. $8-$11. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

sat/04/21

[LECTURE]

Open Minds
HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

Sometimes it seems that there just aren't enough minutes in the day to be productive, successful, thorough and kind. Despite his homeland's state of turmoil, the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, devotes his life to teaching the world about compassion and goodness. In his words, "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves." Stand in the same room as this master of enlightenment when the Dalai Lama leads a discussion titled "Peace of Mind In Troubled Times." Followers of all religions are welcome.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, (562) 436-3661; www.gstdl.org. 1:30 p.m. $20-$94. —AMANDA PARSONS

[CONCERT]

Up In Smoke
420 Hangover Festival

For many of us, April 20 is a high holiday—one of the most anticipated (and poorly planned for) days of the year. But the fun doesn't have to end when you wake up next to the ugly face of reality on Saturday morning; neo-reggae and good vibes are flowing at the 420 Hangover Festival in Santa Ana. Seedless and Pacific Dub will be there, along with the Simpkin Project, Katastro, Zen Robbi, the Originalities, Natural Heights, Badfish, Reeform and Beyond I Sight, plus a very special acoustic set by Mike Pinto. With two stages and 11 bands, that makes, um, more reasons than we can count to get to the Observatory this evening . . . or whenever you make it off the couch.

420 Hangover Festival at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observartoryoc.com. 7 p.m. $20. All ages. —KATHRYN MILLARD

page 21 **SUNDAY** A FINE DAY TO STUFF YOURSELF SILLY

page 21 **MONDAY** STICKY WITH FEARLESS '80S REFERENCES

page 21 **TUESDAY** CORNY JOKES AND A TWO-DRINK MINIMUM

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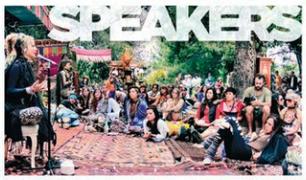

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[FESTIVAL]

Bon Appétit

International Food Festival

For one day only, the city of Tustin transforms into a foodie's paradise with a spread of international cuisine available all in one area. The International Food Festival, sponsored by an array of local businesses, features fare from Bolivia, India, Vietnam and beyond. Experience these cultures and many others by purchasing tickets used to expand your palate at each tasting booth. Besides enjoying a culinary journey around the world and watching a host of local performers (including the Foothill High School Jazz Ensemble and Orange County Music School), you'll be supporting children in the community—proceeds from the festival go the Tustin Public Schools Foundation, individual schools in the district and various school groups.

International Food Festival at the Strata Tustin Center, 14081 Newport Ave., Tustin, (949) 833-8400, ext. 250; www.tustinfestival.com. Noon. Free. —JESSICA FORD

[THEATER]

Head to Head

FROST/NIXON

The Maverick Theater is known for its "staged cinema," theater adapted from or into popular films. Richard Nixon was known for his abnormally large nose. See both at the Maverick, where a production of *Frost/Nixon* is taking place. Directed by Brian Newell and written by Peter Morgan, *Frost/Nixon* follows British comedian and journalist David Frost during a series of interviews with the disgraced ex-president. Nixon's camp, thinking it has found a way to redeem him in the eyes of the public, agrees to the interviews. Nixon dominates the first sections of these encounters, leaving Frost discouraged and facing the end of his serious-journalism career, forever relegated to comedy, satire and variety shows. But, buoyed by an unexpected phone call, Frost finds the fire necessary to carry on and, ultimately, burn Nixon at his own game.

Frost/Nixon at the Maverick Theater, 110 E. Walnut Ave., Fullerton, (714) 526-7070; www.mavericktheater.com. 2 p.m. Through May 27. $12-$22. —CHARLES LAM

mon/04/23

[CONCERT]

Loose Control

Let Em Riot

Alan Oakes is Let Em Riot, the man-machine synth-pop band that's just sticky with fearless '80s references—Flock of Seagulls, Tears for Fears, Frankie says relax!—but plenty of smart arrangements and production absolutely faithful to the era of unwieldy hair and overworked fog machines. After the break-up of his alt-rock band the Appearance, OC music veteran Oakes dove into the music he'd grown up on, eventually delivering more than an album's worth of songs split across an EP and a beefed-up single. Now reinforced for live shows by—naturally!—more keyboards, Let Em Riot are in the middle of a residency at Detroit, at which they reveal that sometimes a synthesizer can indeed have a soul.

Let Em Riot with Brenda Carsey, Laura Meyer and Ballerina Black at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; www.detroitbar.com. 9 p.m. Free. 21+. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

tue/04/24

[THEATER]

Telling Jokes

Tickled Pink

Could there be a profession more terrifying than standup comedy? Oh, the horror of those blank stares and tortuously awkward silences. How the hell can someone even find the *cojones* to get onstage? Maybe by accident. That's the story of Mindy Solomon, the main character in comedian and best-selling author Rita Rudner's theatrical adaptation of her novel, *Tickled Pink*. Rudner plays Mindy, a bright-eyed girl from Miami who sets sail to New York City with hopes of becoming a Broadway dancer. But instead of cutting a rug, she finds herself hanging out in a comedy club, where one day, she serendipitously stumbles onstage and, to her surprise, is actually funny. So head out to the Laguna Playhouse for what Rudner calls an "unauthorized biography."

Tickled Pink at the Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-ARTS; www.lagunaplayhouse.com. 8 p.m.; also Wed.-Thurs. $30-$45. —JOE LAPIN

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JAPANTHER GET A LITTLE SPOTTY

wed/04/25

[CLUB EVENT]

High Voltage
Steve Aoki

One of the most famous DJs on the planet visits little ol' Orange County this week—on a Wednesday of all nights—but it's just another day on the road to Steve Aoki, the Dim Mak founder currently scooting around the continent on his Deadmeat spring bus tour. In addition to his zillion-plus remixes of material by other artists, Aoki released his own album, his third, *Wonderland*, in January, and this time, the stars came to him. With new collaborations featuring everyone from Lovefoxxx to LMFAO to will.i.am to, oddly, Rivers Cuomo, it's obviously a too-cool world he reigns over—and we're just excited to be a part of it.

Steve Aoki at Sutra, 1870 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, (949) 722-7103; www.sutraoc.com. 9 p.m. $30. 21+. —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

Tiny Dancer
Microfest

Imagine a symphony—but the edges are smoothed out, the drops are minimal, and the notes seem to have hardly any space between them. This is microtonal music, a term musicologists and sonic scientists know, but the rest of us? Yeah, no idea. The effect is dreamlike and altogether soothing—and now Chapman University dedicates an entire festival to this unique genre, fittingly called Microfest. The roster features two premieres: the world debut of microtonal master Ben Johnston's "Parable," along with the SoCal introduction to "String Quartet #10" performed by the Del Sol Quartet. Also on the bill is John Schneider's microtonal guitar and vocal performance of "The Tavern," plus the blues-inspired "Suite for Microtonal Piano" by Chapman faculty member Aron Kallay.

Microfest at Salmon Recital Hall, Chapman University, 1 University Dr., Orange, (714) 997-6815; www.chapman.edu. 8 p.m. $5-$10. —ERIN DEWITT

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thu/04/26

[CONCERT]

New Friends
JAPANTHER

Not to be confused with the trancey Japancakes or the punky Japandroids—or even JapanCupid, through which you can meet "1,000s of Japanese women for serious and long-term relationships and marriage"—Japanther are at once none of these things and all of these things, for Japanther are an art project. A rockin' art project that consists of two guys with a set of drums and a guitar who play odd little gigs with surprisingly good songs and sometimes appear alongside giant puppets and synchronized swimmers. Whatever the props, they're always keeping it real; after all, what kind of guys write the lyric "I love you no matter where you've spent the night"? Guys you need to know, that's who.

Japanther with Retox, Boys Who Say No, and Mikki & the Mauses at Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com. 9 p.m. $7. 21+. —STACY DAVIES

[THEATER]

What The?
Goose and Tomtom

The exceedingly quirky Garage Theatre opens its 2012 Armageddon season with *Goose and Tomtom*, written by David Rabe and directed here by Eric Hamme. Described as an "existential mindfuck," it's a story that's difficult to describe—filled with countless what-ifs and indefinite situations, plus a heap of the depraved and sleazy, this is fodder perhaps only appealing to the hardcore theater-goer. Fantasy precedes fact as two thieves kidnap a sex slave (or is she a princess?), steal diamonds (or do they?) and second-guess their own existence along the way. It's all up for interpretation—so pry open that theatrical third eye and prepare for one trippy evening.

Goose and Tomtom at the Garage Theatre, 251 E. Seventh St., Long Beach; www.thegaragetheatre.org. 8 p.m.; also Fri.-Sat. Through May 19. $15-$18. —ERIN DEWITT

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SOUTH AMERICAN SLIDER
JOHANNES DEWALD

One In a Thousand

Mil Jugos moved into bigger digs, but its Venezuelan food is still wonderful

BY EDWIN GOEI

Despite the name, there aren't a thousand juices on offer at Mil Jugos—only 24, but that's plenty because you're in the presence of fruits airport-customs officials would confiscate if they found you trying to smuggle them in your carry-on. So why bother with the Jamba Juice standard bearers of banana, strawberry and mango when you can sample mora, mamey and the incomparable charms of guanabana, a spiky menace of the tropics that has an invigorating tang within its fleshy, cream-colored pulp? Mil Jugos owner Norah Briceño and family will whir up your chosen fruit in blenders with ice and a few spoonfuls of sugar, turning out licuados, smoothies easier to sip than parking in downtown Santa Ana is to find, smoothies such as lulo, which tastes as though God got bored with creating pineapples, oranges and bananas and decided to put all of their flavors into a fruit that looks like a tomato. Drink it quickly. Don't even wait for the still-crunchy sugar crystals to dissolve. The longer you let any of the licuados sit, the more the drink separates. Take this not as a fault, but rather an indicator that they are concocted from the most basic and natural ingredients. Because of it, I consider Mil Jugos easily the best juice bar in OC.

It also happens to be Southern California's only Venezuelan restaurant and was probably one of the tiniest eateries in Santa Ana until it moved into a bigger space next door. In the new digs, the familiar shade of bright-yellow paint acts as visual anti-depressant while the same persistently peppy merengue soundtrack accents the air. But just because it has more room doesn't mean there won't be gridlock at the doorway. Lunchtime brings a flood of bodies descending from the Ronald Reagan Federal Building and Courthouse. If you've heard whispers from your jury-duty pool that there's a great arepa place around the corner, they're talking about Mil Jugos.

What are arepas? They're corn cakes with a crisp-as-paper outer crust and a dense corn-pudding inner core—born from batter and formed into these French macaron-like shapes in an iron press. In a lot of ways, they're not unlike their distant cousins, the Danish ebelskiver and the Japanese takoyaki. But it's the application that sets them apart. They're split down the middle, stuffed with meat and cheese and beans, and eaten as though they're South American sliders. The carne asada may be the simplest filling—a slab of slow-cooked beef touched by wine and brown sugar, a rival to pot roasts in its mouth-melting tenderness. An arepa called carne desmechada bursts with shredded beef and peppers. Better yet, opt for the deluxe version called the pabellon, which takes the same filling and adds a snow-white flurry of grated cheese and a spoonful of black beans that make it taste like a handheld version of a full-on Cuban ropa vieja dinner. The arepa stuffed with the chilled coolness of an avocado-studded chicken potato salad called the reina pepeada might just be the thing to soothe your tongue from the punishing ajis—two kinds of a thick, green, hot sauce applied via squirt bottles that you should've used to douse everything in sight. The mild one is already spicy, colored muted jade, but the one that looks like puréed grass clippings is so sharp it cuts similar to a Schick. Think of it as a hell-bent, chili-powered chimichurri.

The only problem you'll find with Mil Jugos' arepas is they're tiny temptresses, teasing you but never satisfying your hunger unless you take on three at a time. Enter the cachapas, a folded-over corn pancake filled like a gigantic, bloated crepe, landing on the table with a thud. The half-moon-shaped objects—

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH AJI SAUCE
JOHANNES DEWALD

as thick as a two-stack at the IHOP, but as dense as a three-egg omelet—will probably be all you need for lunch. In the cachapa con pernil, you get not only the sugary pancake, in which you still detect the fresh corn kernels embedded within the polenta softness, but also chunks of carnitas-like pork cooked to crispness in its own fat. A generous squirt of the aji would be more than appropriate here.

Though they offer sandwiches and even a burger, I've rarely seen anyone ordering anything other than the arepas washed down with at least one licuado. The meal is easily the best pairing of juice and sandwich since the hot dog-and-smoothie combo at Gray's Papaya. But while New York has about two of those, many imitators, and a thousand other hot-dog stands, there's only one Mil Jugos, and it's in Santa Ana.

MIL JUGOS
318 W. Fifth St., Santa Ana, (714) 836-4601; miljugos.com. Open Mon.-Sat, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Lunch for two, $4-$10. No alcohol.

HOLE IN THE WALL

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

The Best Little Persian Market In OC

MISSION RANCH MARKET
23166 Los Alisos Blvd., Mission Viejo, (949) 707-5879.

God bless the entrepreneurial wile of immigrants, those hardy souls who repurposed cookie-cutter strip malls, shopping plazas and office parks into vibrant centers of commerce, transforming us from a staid, Stepford wasteland into a wonderful community. Perhaps the greatest testament to their ingenuity is Mission Ranch Market in Mission Viejo, which may be the unlikeliest supermarket in the world.

It's in one of those two-story office plazas with slatted wooden walls painted baby blue and white, the type of place that suggests dentist offices, tax preparers and middle-aged secretaries who drive Camrys and take power walks on their lunch breaks. But in this setting, Mission Ranch has carved out an emporium on the first floor, a slow march that has seen it absorb former offices and turn them into a full-fledged Persian grocer with a bizarre layout: whereas a typical market is in the shape of a square, this one is a long, narrow rectangle, new wings created by tearing down the drywall that once separated suites to add a butcher, a baker, a nuts section and all the other produce Persians may require. It's almost as long as a football field by this point, yet it's never wider than 60 feet, if that, and it's not even finished: The cheap carpet of a previous tenant still serves as the floor for the last quarter of the store.

Persians in Mission Viejo? Yep—next to Irvine and Beverly Hills, the town Phillip Morris built has become a mecca, their restaurants, grocers and sweets shops finally adding ethnicity to the city. And Mission Ranch is the anchor, baking fresh, wonderful sangak and other breads; keeping a deli in which everything from sholeh zard to mast-o-musir and other great dips get whipped up daily; piping Farsi-language music to keep people entertained as they decide on which Sadaf spice to purchase. The long stroll through the store will make you hungry, so at the end is a buffet that matches the one at Wholesome Choice polo for polo, kebab for kebab, and even bests it in some instances. Take the tahchin, which looks like cornbread but is saffron rice whipped with egg yolks and yogurt, shaped into a cake, with a chicken middle and burnt rice on top, topped with tart barberries, as fluffy as a quiche and as filling as a pilaf. You can get a brick of the stuff for about eight bucks, enough to serve as four lunches; add a container of shirazi salad (essentially pico de gallo with olive oil) to make the already-moist tahchin even more sumptuous. "Mission Viejo" and "sumptuous"? Who'da thunk it?!

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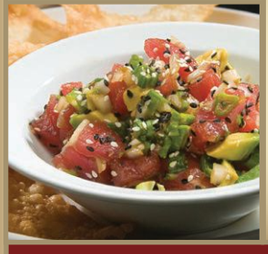

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MARY PASTRANA

IN THROUGH THE SIDEDOOR

ON THE LINE
» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

More Hip for You, Guv'nor?

Ryan O'Melveny Wilson of Five Crowns and SideDoor

The first time I met Ryan O'Melveny Wilson, I wasn't sure it was him; I think the plaid shirt threw me off. His kitchen cool extends beyond his attire, as I find when we meet in the greenhouse of Five Crowns. Get to know the executive chef behind a duo of Corona del Mar's finest.

Your earliest food memory:
Duck-liver pâté. I was probably 2 years old, maybe 2 and a half? It was one of my first solid foods, oddly enough. From there, and for the majority of my childhood, I was a very picky eater. Despite growing up in a restaurant, I liked hamburgers, French fries, bland pasta, etc. "Shades of beige," my parents joke about it, like I was destined to become a chef.
Favorite meal growing up:
Freshly ground hamburgers on toasted sourdough. Dry, no lettuce, nothing on it.
Your best recent food find:
Fried-catfish spring rolls at Ho Ann in Westminster.
Most undervalued ingredient:
Coriander seeds. We put them in our black-pepper mix. I think it gives food a floral, lightly herbaceous quality. Yet you're not actually incorporating herbs. And I think it's incredibly diverse. There are applications from Southeast Asian food to Italian food, and I just think it's one of those spices. I found people always ask, "What's that other flavor in there?"
What is the history behind Five Crowns?
My grandparents bought the restaurant in 1964. They renovated it for about six months and opened Five Crowns in 1965. It's been in our family ever since. It's gone through a couple of different themes to the dining experience. Then, last year, almost to the day, we closed the restaurant for the first time since the early '80s and renovated it to what you see now.
My first full-time kitchen job was here in 2003. I was working on the pantry, making salads and desserts, doing Sunday brunch service. I left to pursue my training in northern California and Europe, then came back in a developmental role with our past executive chef in 2008. I worked on the opening of SideDoor, then did the renovation.
Tell us about your Five Crowns ambassador.
Tommy Martin is an icon in the local community, and personally speaking, he's an inspiration to me as a man and a person of service. He has tirelessly and passionately worked for my family's restaurant for 43 years.
Culinarily speaking, Orange County has the best:
Vietnamese food.
What fast food do you admit to eating?
Carnitas tacos—because it's a carnitas taco.
What is your beverage of choice, and where do you get it?
My favorite cocktail is a Negroni, and I must say Koire Rogers of SideDoor makes one of the finest I know of anywhere.
Where is the cheese and charcuterie from?
We buy from a variety of producers and distributors, but the majority comes from Aniata Cheese in northern San Diego County. It's a program we spend a lot of time on. We make sure there's a good diversity to our products. It's something I'm very proud of.
What does the big red key symbolize?
The title and conceptual ethos of the SideDoor is just that, a secret entrance to your wonderful neighborhood pub. The red key is something of an intimate billboard for SideDoor. It's what we hang outside the restaurant, calling people in for comfort and warm hospitality.
One food you can't live without and why:
Really good olive oil because it's delicious, complex and incredibly diverse.
Where was your most recent meal?
Breakfast with my nephew at my grandparents' home. He's 18 months old. I was feeding him bananas and strawberries and having toast with butter.
Best culinary tip for the home cook:
Keep your knives sharp, and use your

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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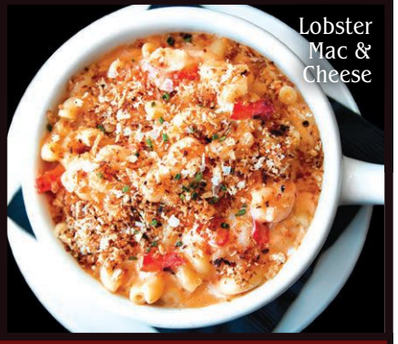
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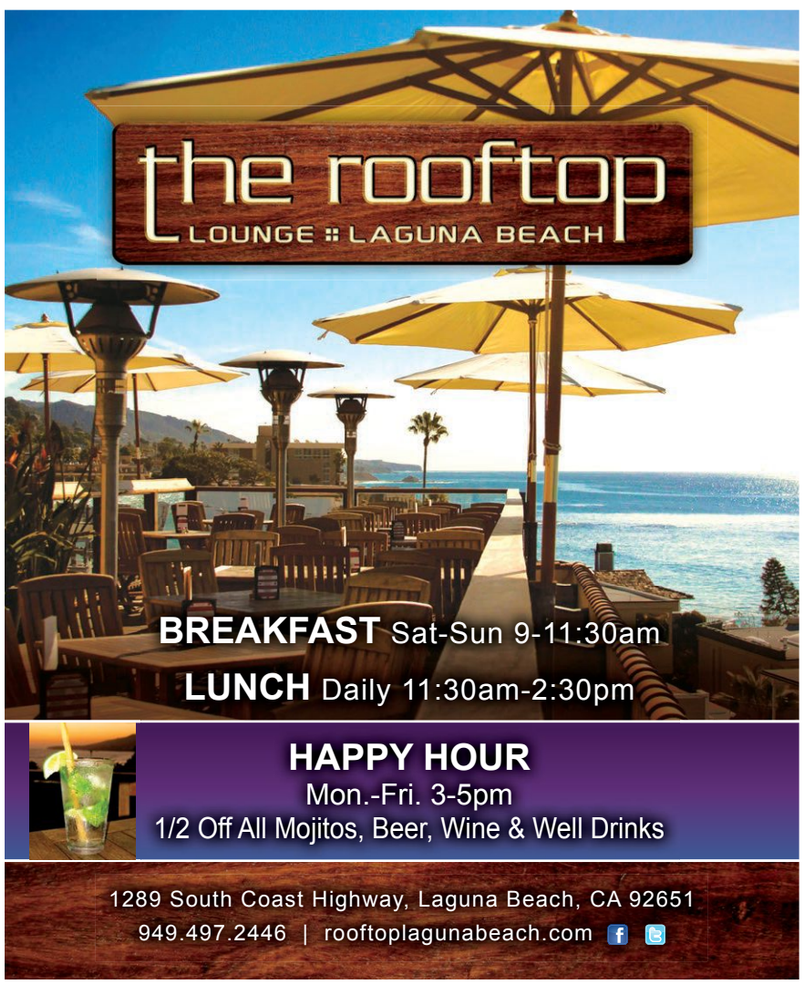

More Hip for You, Guv'nor?

» FROM PAGE 26

steel every time you use your knives.

How long ago did SideDoor start serving brunch?

It's been more than a year now. We do a "beer geek" brunch. We have a couple of standard brunch items, but in addition to them, we take two or three beers and we pair a few dishes specifically to them and package them together. Everybody thinks of the champagne brunch. We thought there's so many incredible beers out there, and people know SideDoor has a great beer program. We saw an opportunity to do something different.

Favorite chef:

I'm enamored with Sean Brock these days because of his passion and dedication to true farm-to-table cooking and rejuvenating a forgotten and lost food culture.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:

Live sea-snail entrails. I was training with a sushi master in Tokyo, after opening one of my family's franchises in Osaka. We were cleaning sea snails, and he literally popped the foot off the snail and cleaned out the majority of the meat. And he rinsed it under the faucet and popped one and said, "You do the same." I rinsed one under the faucet and ate it, and it was one of the more offensive things I've ever eaten. It was still twitching and tasted like battery acid. It's supposed to be good for your health and men's virility.

Sweet or savory?

Savory, for sure. I don't have much of a sweet tooth. Definitely meats and cheeses. I would much rather have a piece of cheese at the end of a meal than, say, a souffle.

Favorite places to eat (besides your own):

Locally speaking, I like Mozza for a chopped salad and a pie. Also, all sorts of spots up in Westminster for Vietnamese food, but I cannot recall all of the names.

You're making breakfast. What are you having?

Usually, just some fresh fruit and a bite of cheese; but when I make something more elaborate, I like poached eggs and some savory, salty meat, such as crispy pork belly.

When you're not in the kitchen cooking, what are you doing?

I love the outdoors and try to find time with one of my bicycles or skis or fly-fishing rods.

We noticed a planter with signage right outside. Could you tell us what it represents?

Sure. That's a planter box from the Ecology Center down in San Juan Capistrano. We're good friends with those guys. The planter boxes are being distributed to local businesses to celebrate Earth Day. Those are lettuce greens that are growing out there to bring awareness. They're locally made, and those are good, quality lettuce greens. I was looking at it, and I might actually have some dinner out of it.

Where did you grow up? What brought you here?

I grew up in Northern California, spread across the Bay Area from Los Altos to Marin County. But I always visited Orange County during the summers to stay at my family's beach homes. Professionally, I moved to Orange County back in 2008 to develop, train and open SideDoor.

MARY PASTRANA

IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST

I hear you come from a lineage of chefs.

Not chefs, but passionate home cooks and a restaurant family. Nearly every member of my family cooks well and often at home, and we all love the pleasures of the table, but I am the first member of my family to pursue cooking as a profession.

Hardest lesson you've learned:

The time and patience needed to successfully reposition a restaurant.

What's your favorite childhood memory?

When I was 7, my dad taught me to flyfish on Hot Creek near Mammoth.

Favorite Halloween costume:

Chiquita Banana. Growing up, my mother would go to incredible lengths to make my sister and me Halloween costumes. I was a full-sized Chiquita Banana that was half-peeled. I was inside this thing, and it was amazing. I wish I had some photographs to dig up. I was a bottle of Grey Poupon mustard another year. I was a surfboard once. But the Chiquita Banana was pretty amazing, and the logo was PERFECT. [My mother] did all sorts of stenciling to blow up the image of the woman.

What were you up to five years ago?

Working in San Francisco at Quince.

Last thing you looked up/searched for online:

"Yankee fried potatoes." It was for our oldest restaurant up in Glendale, the Tam O'Shanter. We're celebrating our 90th anniversary this year, and for part of the celebration we're rolling back, starting with the 1970s. Each month, leading up to the celebration on June 22nd, we're bringing back old menus, and right now I'm working on menus from the 1940s. Out of our archives, they list a dish that has Yankee fried potatoes on them, so I was trying to dig up some reference to a Yankee fried potato. Couldn't find anything, so it's up to my interpretation.

Do you have any skills that are non-food-related?

I love to flyfish and photograph.

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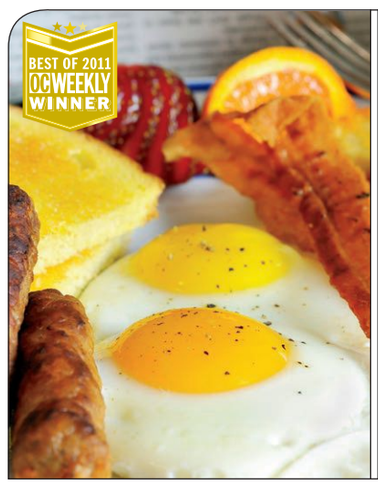

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Halal By the Slice

Spicy BBQ Chicken Pizza at San Giovanni Pizza

MARY PASTRANA

EatthisNow
» YASMIN NOUH

The magic of San Giovanni's barbecue-chicken pizza is the palimpsest of ingredients, each distinct yet meshing into one another so that traces of what's above and below seep through. The owner freshly tosses and bakes every pizza at this halal restaurant upon order—no pie left under hot lamps and thrown into the oven for a quick reheating here.

After rolling a slab of soft, thick dough into a perfect circle, he slathers it in barbecue sauce and tops that with a hefty layer of mozzarella cheese; marinated, barbecue chicken; all-beef pepperoni; red onions; and cilantro. The halal pie gets placed inside a stone oven until the cheese oozes over the crust and the layers fuse into a mess of cilantro-kissed, sweet barbecue, meaty/cheesy/spicy goodness, with a crust that's crunchy yet moist. The original owner was an Egyptian who's spoken of in almost-mythological tones here; some say he learned how to make pizza in Italy, and others claim he's married to an Italian lady who taught him the intricacies of the trade.

Regardless, the truth is that even when ownership was handed over to a Pakistani who added to the menu new items such as a tandoori chicken pizza, San Giovanni's remained a staple in the dining room for any self-respecting, OC Muslim—and lovers of a great slice, for that matter. *From a April 11 Stick a Fork In It post.*

SAN GIOVANNI PIZZA
1001 N. Euclid St., Anaheim, (714) 999-1500; www.sangiovannipizza.com.

DrinkoftheWeek
» DAVE LIEBERMAN

Lágrimas Negras From Ramuri Cerveza Artesanal

All right, beer hipsters, this is it. Anyone can get great beer in Orange and San Diego counties, but the best-kept secret is something you'll have to head south for—past that weird traffic light that says, "México."

The Mexican beer we get up here in the States is like having sex in a boat—fucking close to water—and in order to lend any flavor at all, it gets adulterated with lime, Clamato, Worcestershire sauce and such. Most of the mass-market stuff in Mexico is similar to that, with Tecate being the king of Baja beer. But there's hope: Craft beer has spread south from San Diego, and there are several craft breweries in Tijuana and Mexicali now. Most don't have tasting rooms open to the public, but there are specialty beer bars where you can taste them.

Ramuri Cerveza Artesanal set up a booth at last year's Baja Culinary Fest, and just about everyone who tried what it offered loved it. The company specializes in dark beers, stouts mostly, which flies in the face of Mexico's tradition of light, fizzy lagers; of those, its best is Lágrimas Negras ("Black Tears"), an oatmeal stout.

THE DRINK

One thing this beer does not have is a huge head; it has the minimum possible carbonation, so you have to pour the beer straight down into the pint glass to get a thin layer of head. This is a heavy beer—low-carbonation beers drink slower—so take it slow. Once you take a sip, however, it's great. Though it's an oatmeal stout, the grain provides an undertone to the roasted, nutty, almost chocolatey flavors.

No lime wedge required—just a trip to the reinvented Tijuana. *From an April 13 Stick a Fork In It post.*

LÁGRIMAS NEGRAS is available only in Tijuana right now—check our Stick a Fork In It blog for listings!

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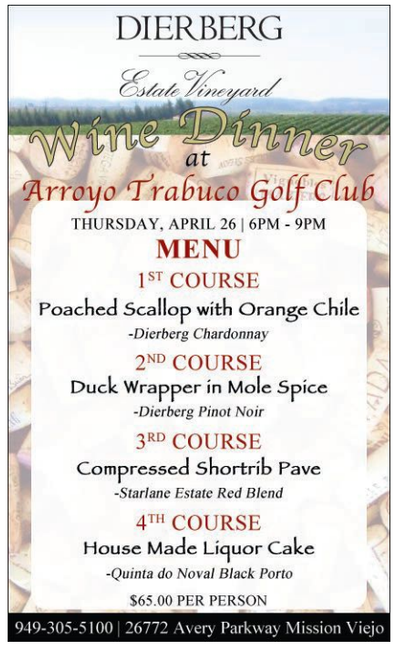
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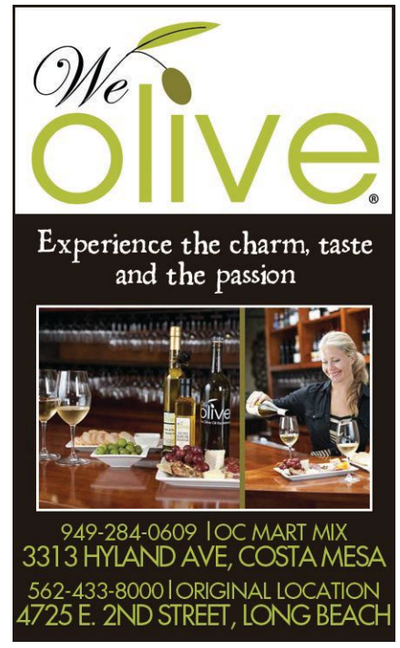
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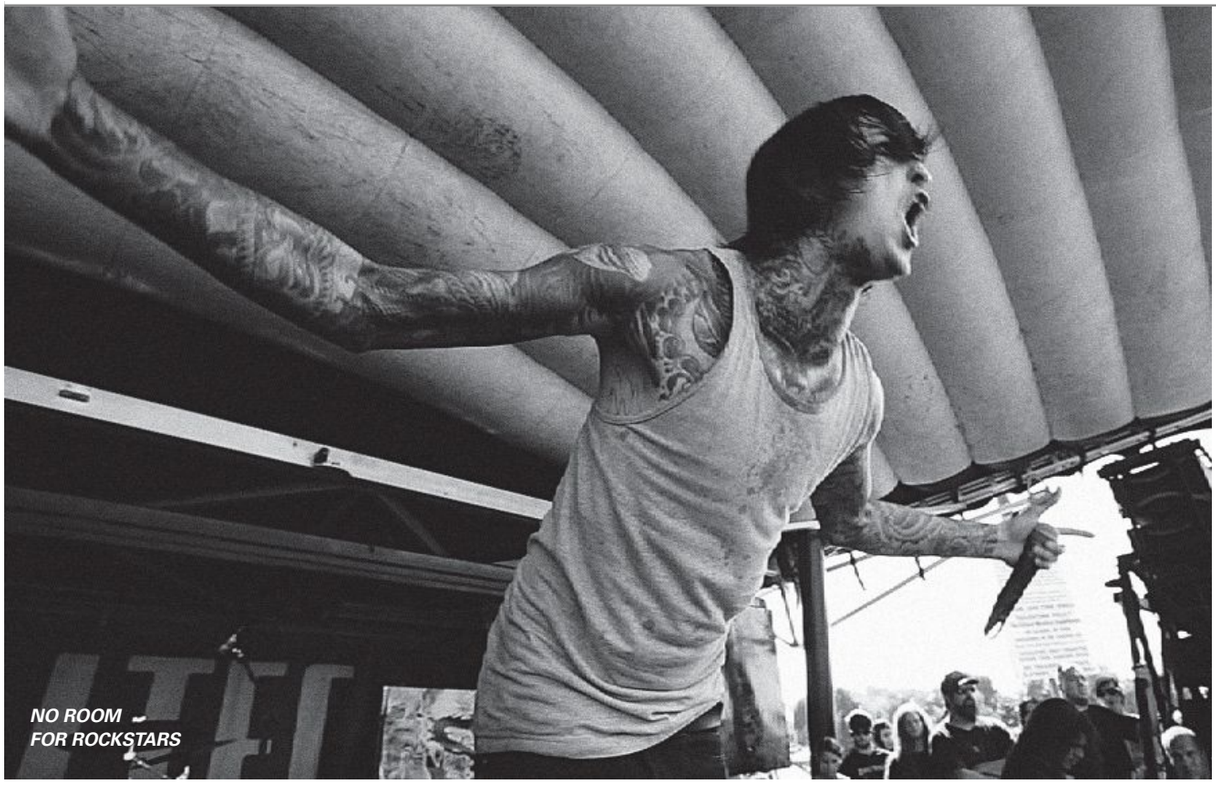


NO ROOM FOR ROCKSTARS

Sounds and Fury

Newport Beach Film Festival's music series makes more noise

BY MATT COKER

The Newport Beach Film Festival series of music-themed pictures returns for a second year with a new partner, the OC Music Awards, and a program that has been expanded to 12 films, including three can't-miss documentaries.

The best is *Under African Skies* from Joe Berlinger, the award-winning filmmaker known for *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster* and the *Paradise Lost* trilogy that helped free the wrongly convicted West Memphis Three. A 2005 Newport Beach festival player with *Gray Matter*, which chronicled the slaughterhouse research of children deemed inferior by Nazis in Austria, Berlinger returns with a film that heralds the 25th anniversary of Paul Simon's masterpiece *Graceland*—and all the controversy that surrounded it.

Catchy songs such as "Homeless," "You Can Call Me Al" and the title track have become so ubiquitous—Muzak versions are now soundtracks for teeth cleanings—that it's easy to forget the shitstorm their original releases unleashed. Simon broke a United Nations cultural embargo by traveling to apartheid-era South Africa to record with black musicians and the a capella troupe Ladysmith Black Mambazo. When the legendary singer/songwriter returns to a now-free South Africa for a *Graceland* reunion show, it's obvious the wounds remain (screens April 29 and May 2).

Bad vibes also run deep in Roger Paradiso's jaw-dropping *I Want My Name Back*, which examines the hell hip-hop-pioneering original members of the Sugarhill Gang encounter trying to sing the songs they wrote, recorded and first performed in the late 1970s. That's because the group's name, tunes such as "Rapper's Delight" and "Apache," and even the stage names of Wonder Mike and Master Gee are owned by Sugarhill Records and the deceased label owner's son Joe Robinson Jr., who tours as the "original" Master Gee and Sugarhill Gang (April 27 and April 30).

I AM NOT A HIPSTER

Struggles of musicians who've made it (Suicide Machine), never been heard of (Forever Came Calling) and fall somewhere in between (Mike Posner and Never Shout Never's Christofer Drew) are presented in *No Room for Rockstars*, a very low-tech but highly worthy behind-the-scenes look at the 2010 Warped Tour. Director Parris Patton somehow cut 300 hours of footage down to compelling, criss-crossing stories that prove no matter where you rank on the fame food chain, you have to work your ass off to succeed (May 1).

Documentaries that were not previewed: the world premiere of *Blue Planet: Sounds*, which world-renowned Laguna Beach marine artist Wyland made about a blues tour he mounted to draw attention to the 2010 Gulf oil spill (April 28); Judy Chaikin's *The Girls In the Band*, which rights the wrong of female horn players being marginalized throughout jazz history (April 28 and April 30); Andrea Meyerson's *I Stand Corrected*, a profile of talented bassist Jennifer Leitham, who started her jazz career as John Leitham (April 29); Ernesto Contreras and Jose Manuel Cravioto's *Being: Café Tacuba*, a behind-the-scenes look at Mexico's 20-year-old rock band traveling the world (April 30 and May 3); and Jesse Vile's *Jason Becker: Not Dead Yet*, about an electric-guitar protégé from the late '80s diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease at the tender age of 20 (May 3).

> *I Am Not a Hipster* is about an insufferable asshole . . . [who] can't stand his dad, his best friend [and] the groupies he bangs.

Stunning visually and sonically, director Tom Gustafson's magnifico-titled dramedy *Mariachi Gringo* finds a young man who lives somewhere near corn fields getting hooked on the mariachi music an elderly Mexican gent plays in a taco joint in town. Señor takes *el gringo* under his wing, and faster than you can say, "Holy, Mr. Miyagi," our young hero is onstage in Mexico, in full mariachi wear, impressing the locals with his Spanish singing and guitar licks. (April 27, with an accompanying Friday Night Showcase party, and April 30).

Destin Daniel Cretton's downer drama *I Am Not a Hipster* is about an insufferable asshole (Dominic Bogart), who moonlights as a singer/songwriter in San Diego. The hipsters are the adoring audiences the guy hates. He also can't stand his dad, his best friend, the groupies he bangs—hell, everyone except the small fries in the school where he teaches and his adorable sisters, who all appear to have come from different parents. There is snappy music from the indie scene south of us, but I must confess the protagonist had me thinking of a new place to stow his guitar (April 27, with the Friday-night party).

Unpreviewed music features: Ryan O'Nan's *The Brooklyn Brothers Beat the Best*, about a sibling duo setting off for one last tour to determine whether they should abandon their childhood dream (April 27, with the Friday-night party, and May 1); Sara Sugarman's *Vinyl*, based on the true story of 1980s Welsh punk band the Weapons of Happiness who, on the verge of obscurity, punked the rock world by releasing a hit song under a fake band name in 2004 (April 28); and the world premiere of Konrad Begg's *Songs for Amy*, about a tormented Irish singer/songwriter creating an album to redeem for mistakes he made with his true love (May 1, with an Irish Spotlight film party, and May 3).

NEWPORT BEACH FILM FESTIVAL opens April 26. For show times, locations, tickets and other details, visit newportbeachfilmfest.com. Through May 3.

opening

CHIMPANZEE Disneynature's latest Earth Day release hunkers down in an Ivory Coast rain forest, taming its beasts-in-the-wild raw material into a family-friendly (though not totally sugarcoated) heroes-and-villains adventure, as did the brand's previous film, *African Cats. Chimpanzee* follows energetic young primate Oscar, still reliant on his mother, Isha, for food and protection. Conflict arrives via a fruit-and-nut-based turf war: Local alpha male Freddy leads his charges against an enemy faction of chimps, headed by the sinister-sounding Scar (echoes of Mouse House favorite *The Lion King*). During one interclan dustup, Isha goes missing, leaving Oscar to fend for himself. Strictly from a nature-doc angle, *Chimpanzee* is impressive stuff. Directors Alastair Fothergill and Mark Linfield get up close as the chimps go about their daily routines (grooming one another, cracking open nuts, hunting monkeys); the filmmakers also nicely depict their animal subjects' domain through occasional teeming-forest time-lapse and sweeping views above the canopy. The burden of massaging the natural-habitat footage into an intelligible rival-families narrative, though, falls to the voiceover script. Throughout, narrator Tim Allen shuttles between a jokey primer on chimp society and a basic play-by-play during the more action-packed scenes—the constant stream of explanation often detracts from the heart-of-the-jungle sights and sounds. **(G)** Benjamin Mercer. *Countywide.*

THE LUCKY ONE *The Lucky One* is the seventh movie based on a Nicholas Sparks book—two more are currently in pre-production—and, well, it's no *Notebook*. In fact, it's the most leaden of the bunch. Zac Efron stars as U.S. Marine Sergeant Logan Thibault, who's on his third tour of Iraq as the film opens. After a firefight, Logan is resting by a truck when something in the dirt catches his eye: a photo of pretty girl standing near a lighthouse. Just as Logan walks over to pick it up, a mortar round blows up his truck. Close call! That photo becomes Logan's lucky charm, and when his tour ends, he sets out to find the girl. Faster than you can say Google, Logan locates the lighthouse in Louisiana, and soon enough is shaking hands with Beth (Taylor Schilling), his blond talisman. Love stories of this type are all about failed communication, and so it is that before he can explain about the photo, Beth has mistaken Logan for a job applicant, and hired him to work at the gorgeous, farm-like pet kennel she runs with the grandmother who raised her (Blythe Danner). Lust does eventually win out, Efron's shirt finally (!) comes off and he and Schilling feign PG-13 ecstasy. But no amount of back arching can make us believe there's real heat rising between these two. Onscreen chemistry between actors is a mysterious thing—100 years into cinema, it remains the one story element that Hollywood can't fake. **(PG-13)** Chuck Wilson. *Countywide.*

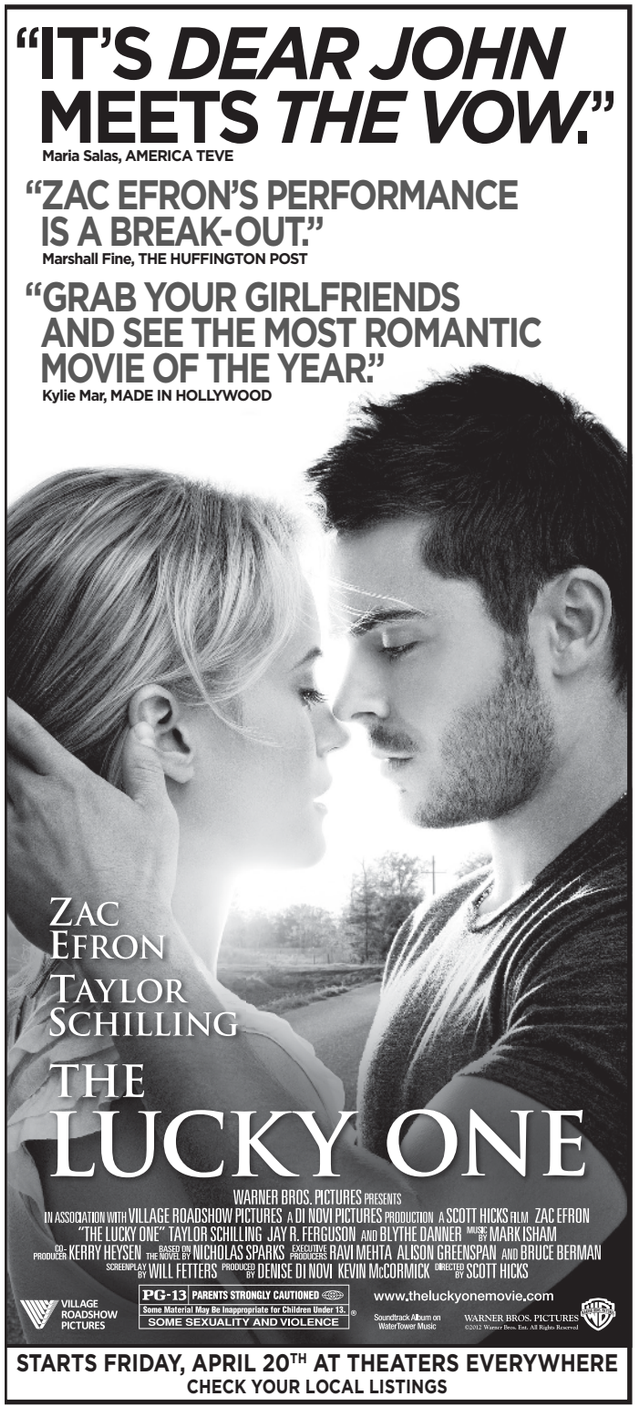
MARLEY Thoroughly researched and packed with phenomenal archival footage, Kevin Macdonald's documentary on the reggae and Rasta emissary, who died of cancer in 1981 at 36, avoids (until the closing credits) oversimplified one-love-praise-Jah sloganeering. *Marley* is a rousing tribute to a mesmerizing performer that forgoes blind hero worship. Macdonald interviews 60 people on three different continents, many of whom remain entranced by the singer's talent and charisma. But a few harbor resentment: Long-reclusive Bunny Wailer, Marley's bandmate in the Wailers from 1963-74, still bristles when recalling Bob's willingness to go along with Island Records founder Chris Blackwell's "exploitative" practices. Others refuse to take the bait. When Rita Marley is asked how she felt about her husband's infidelities—Bob had 11 children from seven different relationships—she smiles and notes that she had loftier matters to consider. "It was like an evangelical campaign," she says of touring with her spouse as a member his all-female backup group. The film's most fascinating talking head, Rita also has perplexing thoughts on Bob's biracial makeup. Of the melanoma found on her husband's toe in 1977, she avows "it was the whiteness in him" that caused it. Whiteness, in a way, did bedevil Marley, who was always puzzled by the lack of black audience members at his sold-out concerts, especially in the U.S. Yet footage of Marley performing reveals the fervor of the "evangelical campaign" Rita remembers. Onstage, Marley is transcendent, enraptured. The mood is mystical, never mellow. **(PG-13)** Melissa Anderson. *Regency South Coast Village, Santa Ana.*

THINK LIKE A MAN As 2009's dismal *He's Just Not That Into You* showed, about the only draw of movies based on relationship-advice books—bloated with plot thickets propelled by depressing heterosexual-coupling stratagems and counterattacks that would make even Sun Tzu weep with exhaustion—is watching a few talented performers make do with the worst. Based on Original King of Comedy and *Family Feud* host Steve Harvey's self-help primer *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, this adaptation by Tim Story (*Fantastic Four*) often plays like a book on tape: The women characters, advising one another about 90-day rules and "controlling the cookie," begin their lines with, "As Steve Harvey says . . ." and the author himself (who also executive produced) frequently pops up, directly addressing the camera and quoting himself. When the male counterparts of four dyads—one long-term couple plus three sets of daters—realize their girlfriends have been putting Harvey's words into action, they strike back with calculations of their own, the manipulations apparently laying the groundwork for fulfilling relationships based on trust and open communication. Enduring a day-long session of couples' therapy is more fun (and flies by faster) than this film, but relief is found whenever Michael Ealy, as a caterer trying to impress Taraji P. Henson's class-conscious CEO, and the redoubtable ham Jenifer Lewis, mother to a worshipful son, are on-screen. **(PG-13)** Melissa Anderson. *Countywide.*

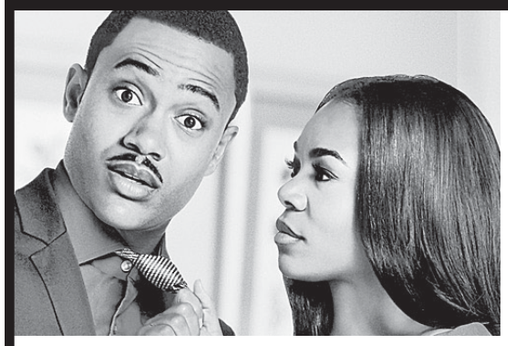
ongoing

CASA DE MI PADRE Rogue comic Will Ferrell recently turned up on an Old Milwaukee commercial exclusively for the Davenport, Iowa, local market; the obvious next career move, then, is *Casa de Mi Padre*, a modern-day tortilla western/telenovela spoof entirely in Spanish. Squinting into the middle distance with "the eyes of a small chicken" and expressively mangling hand-rolled cigarettes, Ferrell plays Armando Alvarez, dull-witted son of a widowed rancher (Pedro Armendariz Jr.) whose preferred heir, brother Raul (Diego Luna), has turned to drug trafficking, sparking a violent turf war with rival dealer Onza (Gael Garcia Bernal). There has always been a flamboyant, sartorial element to Ferrell's comedy, and it's clear that he and director Matt Piedmont, a former *SNL* writer, love the melodrama they're parodying: The protracted death scenes and abrupt musical numbers, the streaming golden light, Catholic-Mayan iconography, and blood-splattered white roses. *Casa de Mi Padre* riffs freely on impoverished production values—phony painted backdrops and the reflection of the camera crew in a DEA agent's sunglasses—but the humor doesn't only target south of the border. Like any good genre product, *Casa* also smuggles in rude social criticism, as when Armando memorably describes drug-addicted Americans as "shit-eating crazy monster babies." **(R)** Nick Pinkerton. *Countywide.*

THE DEEP BLUE SEA *The Deep Blue Sea*, the first fiction feature in a dozen years from the visionary British director Terence Davies, is a film about love that in no way reassures that love conquers all. Plumbing disquieting depth, *Deep Blue Sea* interrogates the insoluble expectations of romantic love: that we can or will find every quality that we want in a single person. Lady Hester



THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO THINK...



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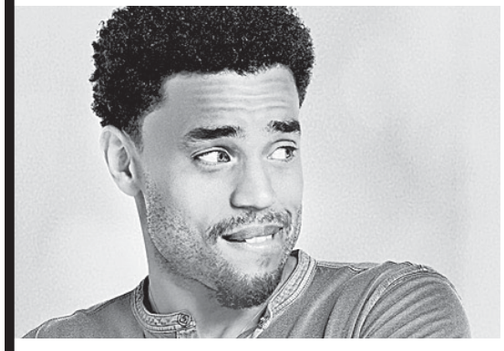

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TO VIEW THE ZONE PAGES FOR YOUR AREA, PLEASE FLIP TO THE BACK OF THIS BOOK.

Collyer (Rachel Weisz) has left her husband, high court judge Sir William (Simon Russell Beale)—and a postwar life of cultured conversation and posh fireside comfort—to live in slummy sin with Freddie (Tom Hiddleston), an emotionally immature former RAF pilot who survived the Battle of Britain but never readapted to civilian life, and whose love-making has irreparably shaken up the foundations of Hester's existence. In the aftermath of a botched suicide attempt, Hester recalls the events that have led her here, establishing the pattern of alternating between the present-tense drama of Hester and Freddie's affair in its final dissolution—accompanied by the re-emergence of Sir William—and its history. In a richly symphonic work, Davies and his cast create the rare triangular affair where every side of the triangle is drawn with equal care and sympathy, where each party's hopes—and their disappointments—are eloquently understood. **(R)** Nick Pinkerton. *Art Theatre, Long Beach.*

FRIENDS WITH KIDS Best friends since college, Jason (Adam Scott) and Julie (Jennifer Westfeldt) witness the misery that seems to dominate the lives of their wedded pals who have babies—Leslie and Alex (Maya Rudolph and Chris O'Dowd), and Missy and Ben (Kristen Wiig and Jon Hamm, Westfeldt's longtime partner). So close that they call each other up at 4 a.m. to compare notes on the one-night stands sleeping beside them, the two late-thirtyish chums, who live in the same rent-stabilized Upper West Side apartment building, decide to make a kid the old-fashioned way—a one-time-only act—and raise him together but remain uncoupled and pursuing other bedmates. This unconventional arrangement will resolve conventionally, of course, as per the immutable laws of romantic comedy, which regard single adults as scourges to be cured. But further hobbling the march to the inevitable that stunts *Friends With Kids*—Westfeldt's directorial debut and her third film as writer/producer/star—is the frequently weak dialogue and forced character epiphanies. Even more to its detriment, *Friends With Kids* will remind you of the cast's earlier efforts, namely Westfeldt's uneven but still tart and precise *Kissing Jessica Stein* (2001) and *Bridesmaids*. The four battle-weary parents in *FWK* are played by actors from that broad studio comedy, which nonetheless conveyed hilarious insight into the horrors of parenting, living single, and settling down—qualities missing from Westfeldt's small-scale, "indie-personal" film. **(R)** Melissa Anderson. *Countywide.*

JEFF, WHO LIVES AT HOME It's obvious that Jason Segel has a face for comedy. He's got a lumpy, sad-sack mug with a dozen inflections to register disappointment, confusion, and self-doubt. But as the basement-dwelling hero in Jay and Mark Duplass' new quest movie, Segel works his entire posture for laughs. He slumps expressively on the couch, does bong rips, and ignores chore requests from his exasperated mother (Susan Sarandon). He cringes meekly when being scolded by his asshole older brother (Ed Helms), who at least has a job and wife (Judy Greer). And yet Segel has more range than simply being a six-foot-four schlemiel. *Jeff, Who Lives at Home* is a surprisingly mutable, ultimately poignant day-in-the-life drama about a slacker who genuinely wants to stand tall. "All this randomness is leading somewhere," Jeff says hopefully. As in their prior *The Puffy Chair* and *Cyrus*, the Duplass brothers are interested in demi-adults in the process of discovering, however belatedly, who they are. Accordingly, there are some weird emotional shifts in tone in *Jeff*, a karma caper that alternates between Jeff's increasingly meandering errand and his widowed mother's confusion over a secret admirer at work. Yet throughout his bungling (and his brother's gradual awakening), Jeff has a shambling, stubborn decency to him, a trace of Lebowski. And when all the characters and coincidences ultimately converge, it ought not be surprising that the Duplass brothers hand out multiple merit badges—but at least they feel earned. *Jeff* is not a major film, but it's an endearing adventure in hope nonetheless. **(R)** Brian Miller. *Countywide.*

THE KID WITH A BIKE In the new film from Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, Cyril (Thomas Doret), a scrappy 11-year-old living in an urban orphanage, flees school in an attempt to track down both his deadbeat dad (Jeremie Renier) and the bike he left at his dad's house. On the lam, Cyril carelessly crashes into Samantha (Cecile de France), a hairdresser with a shop in Dad's former neighborhood, and impulsively asks her to be his foster mom. In what plays within the Dardennes' understated naturalism as a shocking twist, she agrees. This tentative new family is threatened when Cyril, desperate for male mentorship, falls prey to the manipulations of Wes (Egon Di Mateo), a slick teenage thug. The second half of the film consists of a fight for Cyril's soul, with the straight-and-narrow Samantha on one side and the marginal milieu of Wes' gang, who lures Cyril into the forest on the outskirts of town, on the other. In placing an unformed boy in limbo between an angelic godmother and wolves in the woods, *The Kid With a Bike* becomes a fairy tale. It seems to unfold in a different world than that of previous Dardenne films, one with a wider range of spiritual and practical possibilities. It's set in the summer, the T-shirted boy moving against a palette of primary colors and hazy, warm light—the vibe is hopeful. It's still a version of the filmmakers' constant inquiry into moral consciousness but on a new path and with a new destination—a tentative happy ending. **(PG-13)** Karina Longworth. *Countywide.*

SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN The kind of benign, swooningly humanist crowd-pleaser Lasse Hallstrom (*The Cider House Rules*, *Chocolat*) could make in his sleep (and by this point, possibly does), *Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* mostly sacrifices the political satire and epistolary structure of Paul Torday's source novel in favor of cute, if strained, rom-com shenanigans. If you're not getting enough of that from network TV, this movie's for you. *Salmon Fishing*, which sets up its premise and expectations in the title, concerns London fisheries specialist Fred Jones (Ewan McGregor), who's tasked by the prime minister's flack (Kristin Scott Thomas) to export British salmon to a Yemeni river at the request of a sheikh (Amr Waked) with a jones for fly-fishing. The sheikh's real estate assistant (Emily Blunt) tags along to help and, in the process, entices the unhappily married Jones into romance and Hallstrom-ian self-actualization. The first section of the film deploys chipper barbs at the expense of career bureaucrats, which is funny and effective—Scott Thomas, who brings the raunch, is particularly good—but once McGregor and Blunt start dissecting their complicated feelings for each other, things turn unexpectedly dire. They're a ridiculously attractive and likable couple, but Hallstrom overwhelms them (and the lush Scottish and Moroccan locations, and us) with his customary brand of lightweight heavy-handedness. **(PG-13)** Mark Holcomb. *Countywide.*

THE STATE OF THE ART.

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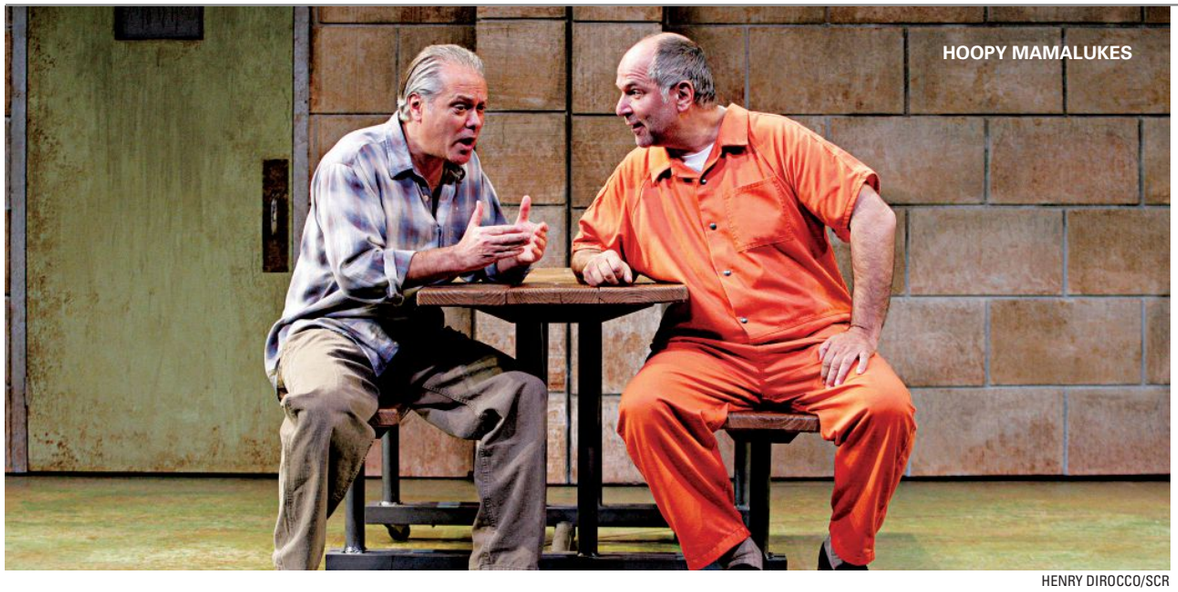

HOOPY MAMALUKES

HENRY DIROCCO/SCR

Lake Talk

South Coast Repertory gets hoopy with Shakespeare in *The Prince of Atlantis*

BY JOEL BEERS

It's often said that every great play, in some fashion, deals with home: finding one, losing one, figuring out one's place in the world with or without one. You see it in everything from *Oedipus* to *Hamlet*, with Willy Loman and even Beckett's two tramps.

Steven Drukman's *The Prince of Atlantis* may not introduce characters of that stature to the literary rolls of western civilization, but his play is similarly steeped in the concept of place, both personal and familial. In its world-premiere production at South Coast Repertory, helmed in deceptively measured tones by Warner Shook, one of America's finest directors, Drukman's ordinary-seeming characters struggle mightily with the ties that bind, ones that are never too far from fraying.

Though suffused with moments of intense emotion, the play is also a rollicking good time. Its weighty concerns of finding—or keeping—one's place in a complicated, heartbreaking world radiate life through four sharply drawn personalities: two deliriously over-the-top characters that approach *The Honeymooners*' Kramdens in their verbal sparring; an earnest younger man trying to discover his biological parents; and easily the play's most complicated figure, a fractured, far-too-kind soul forced to make the toughest decision of all.

And it's all framed through a syntax that few people outside a small neighborhood in Newton, Massachusetts, even know exists: "Lake Talk." It's from the Nonantum neighborhood, one of those working-class melting pots into which Italians, Irish and French-Canadians were tossed. The resulting vocabulary sounds Bostony in accent, but the words are a mixture of Italian, English, Roman, and street slang from the 1930s and '40s.

Overchay is bullshit. Scoff is eat. Gash is an effeminate male. Toss that in with such Boston-specific words as hoopy (crazy), belagers (beer) and mamaluke (jackass), and you have a play dealing with the secrets, lies and complicated histories of families everywhere—but sounding unlike anything you may have heard.

Nothing screams comedy as does a play that begins in prison. That's where Joey (a tempestuous John Kapelos) is spending the next nine months, due to some shady dealings at the Boston fish-importing company he has built into a small empire, the Prince of Atlantis. His younger brother, Kevin (Matthew Arkin, who bears no small resemblance to his father, Alan Arkin) seems far softer than the rough-hewn Joey. He floats through life self-medicating, with frequent allusions to time spent in the "looney-bin" indicating some serious issues.

Kevin seems relegated to taking orders from his brother, who constantly reminds him of how he has cared for him since their parents were killed by a drunk driver. The younger brother's latest assignment? He needs to communicate with a 30-year-old man who has recently contacted Joey: his son, Miles (an empathetic Brett Ryback), whom Joey says was put up for adoption after a drunken high-school tryst upon a sailboat.

Though he has never seen Miles, Joey is ecstatic. Twice divorced and with no heir, the incarcerated man sees a perfect opportunity to groom someone to be the new king of Atlantis.

But there are two problems: Joey doesn't want his son to know he's in prison, and his girlfriend and business partner, Connie (a shrill and irritating, if eminently likeable, Nike Doukas), has a say in the future of the company.

Kevin, running interference for his older brother, pretends to be Joey in an email to Miles. He says he'd love to meet his "son," but he's doing business in Vietnam for nine months. Kevin's not the most quick-witted guy, and even though sworn to secrecy, he spills the goods to Connie, turning Joey's overchay into a life-changing turn for everyone involved.

Though he's the most subdued, confused character in the play on the surface, Arkin's Kevin is a marvel of restrained complexity. Every moment you think you've got a handle on him, a new revelation arises, threatening to unravel the elaborate network of small fibs and big lies the play's foundation rests upon.

It's a constantly entertaining and heartfelt play, one in which surprises pile upon one another. And though the constant use of Lake Talk sometimes created auditory sound bumps, Drukman skillfully interweaves Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through the proceedings via constant allusions and incorporating some of its motifs. The result is an intoxicating brew of rough-and-tumble, working-class jargon and literary heft.

The biggest nod to Shakespeare's little play, surprisingly, isn't found in the most obvious spot: a son caught up in familial intrigue. It's far more personal and lies in *Hamlet*'s famous "to be or not to be" soliloquy. Issues of self-worth, one's purpose, the question to retire from life or tackle it head-on—these are the real questions of Drukman's play.

And the fact that the play's hero rises from the lowest rung of challengers gives it an underdog twist difficult to resist.

THE PRINCE OF ATLANTIS
at South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-5555; www.scr.org. Thurs.-Fri., 8 p.m.; Sat., 2:30 p.m. & 8 p.m.; Sun., 2:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.; Tues.-Wed., 7:30 p.m. Through April 29. $20-$68.

TRENDZILLA
» MICHELLE WOO

Dollar Shopping, Japan Style

I went to Japan and fell in love.

It was my first time there, and *whoooooa*, the place is surreal. I felt like a metal ball in a pinball machine, gleefully bouncing around amid flashing lights, bizarre corners and colorful characters. I've been back a week and already miss the food (ramen everywhere!), the *kanpais*, the brilliantly organized chaos.

So when I heard OC would be getting a slice of Japan in the form of Higashi-based discount retailer **Daiso**, I was giddy. The 11,000-square-foot superstore was unveiled April 14 in Irvine's Heritage Plaza, and I joined 4,000 others who braved the grand-opening extravaganza of the second location in Southern California.

Okay, before we continue, here's something you must know about Daiso Irvine: EVERYTHING IS A BUCK-FIFTY! (Fine print: except for a handful of items, clearly marked.) Another thing you must know? You will still spend all your money there because EVERYTHING IS ADORABLE! (Or, as the Japanese say, *kawaii*.)

Inside the massive, pink-walled store is, well, a whole lot of stuff. There's kitchenware (pastel popsicle molds, sushi rollers, banana cases, chicken-shaped timers, plaid bento boxes, as well as standard rice bowls, chopsticks and teapots), storage accessories (hampers, compression bags) and cleaning supplies (frog sponges, nets for hang-drying your sweaters). There's stuff for women (fake eyelashes, makeup, wigs), men (ties, argyle socks), kids (tiny erasers resembling plates of curry, Cup Noodles and mochi balls on a stick) and pets (polka-dot bowls, leashes). There are things you need in your life right this minute (slippers with microfiber dusters on the bottom so you can clean as you stroll through the house!) and things you *probably* don't (LED-light earwax picks, inflatable man boobs).

It's dangerously easy to toss things into your basket without guilt. ("Well, it is *only* $1.50.") As I fought the masses through the aisles, I started grabbing items with abandon: a charcoal facial mask! A strawberry coin bank! A soap dish shaped like a bunny! When I was finally ready to check out (basically, when my basket got too heavy), I headed to the cashier and saw that, yep, there was more. Snacks—lots of them. Japanese goodies from pastries to Pocky to sembei (rice crackers). My pile of loot grew.

In the end, I spent $46.31 on stuff I could have lived without, but shopping for everyday goods has never been this fun. And for now, it's way cheaper than a plane ticket back to Japan.

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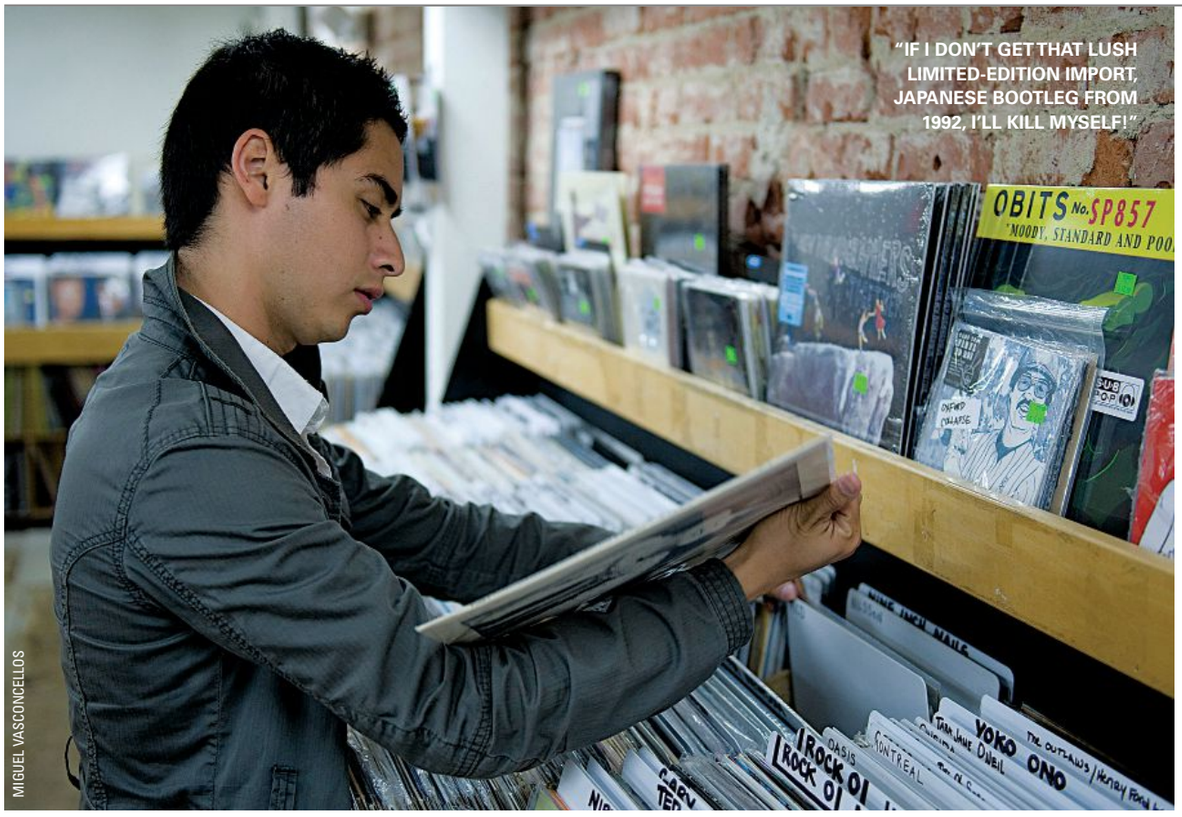

"IF I DON'T GET THAT LUSH LIMITED-EDITION IMPORT, JAPANESE BOOTLEG FROM 1992, I'LL KILL MYSELF!"

MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS

Did Record Store Day Save Vinyl?

The annual event wants to promote indies, but some smaller shops feel left out next to little-big stores such as Amoeba

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

"Before we got involved, it was dead," Michael Kurtz says. "We reinvented the vinyl industry." Record Store Day, of which he is co-founder and manager, breathed new life into the business, he says.

The annual event that takes place on the third Saturday of April pays tribute to what was, until recently, considered an endangered species: the independent record store. It began in 2007 with Eric Levin, Kurtz, Carrie Colliton, Amy Dorfman, Don Van Cleave and Brian Poehner, just after the fall of behemoth Tower Records. Although by the time it filed for bankruptcy in 2006, Tower had sold more CDs than vinyl, it was still a scary time for the music industry. After all, the chain that had brought music to the masses had just disintegrated. Kurtz approached Metallica with the idea of putting an event together to save vinyl, and the legendary metal band were happy to help out. They officially kicked off the first Record Store Day on April 19, 2008, with a performance at Rasputin Music in Mountain View.

Since then, labels have put out limited-edition releases each April. The media are mostly on vinyl and distributed via independent music retailers across the world. Performers including Lady Gaga, Bruce Springsteen and Adele have given fans exclusive content to seek out on this special day. This year's offerings include some interesting rarities, such as a 7-inch of Feist covering Mastodon split with Mastodon covering Feist, as well as a Flaming Lips collaboration with Bon Iver.

Kurtz posits the group saved the vinyl industry because the rare collectibles released on Record Store Day and parties around the event have given vinyl a higher profile, making it a product consumers covet. Thus, on Record Store Day, people are buying vinyl anywhere from a pop-up shop at Coachella to, more recently, places in Japan and China. Top-tier acts perform in neighborhood record stores; in 2011, the Foo Fighters performed at Fingerprints in Long Beach.

To some, the claim that Record Store Day saved the dying vinyl industry is a bold statement. "That's crap," says Bill Evans, owner of Black Hole Records in Fullerton. "For one thing, vinyl was always around—it never went out [of style]. Our country fell into the CD trap of the '90s, [but] people in Europe always bought vinyl. Over here, people finally figured it out."

Instead, Evans credits the resurgence of vinyl to the CD industry. "CD people got greedy," he says. "They charged too much and the bands didn't get anything. They screwed everybody."

After the rise of Napster and the file-sharing craze of the early 2000s, compact disc sales took a fall, just as their petroleum predecessor did. "That cut a crack in the armor," Evans says. "They were like, 'We gotta get on the downloading thing,' but they took too long. They kept making expensive CDs and dragging their feet. So vinyl came back [when CDs died]."

In general, however, vinyl sales *are* on the rise—and have been for some time. On the first Record Store Day, Nielsen SoundScan's music-sales statistics showed just a 0.4 percent increase in record-store album sales compared to the previous week. These numbers rose steadily in recent years; last year, vinyl sales increased 36.3 percent, with 3.9 million units sold versus 2010's 2.8 million—a Nielsen SoundScan sales record. It's tough to attribute this rise to any one factor, though Record Store Day certainly gives people reason to head to a local shop.

This year, there will be 600 artists participating in releases, appearances and performances at independent shops. There will be approximately 200 exclusive releases, ranging from huge (the Black Keys, Paul McCartney, David Bowie) to hip (Nobunny, Beach House, St. Vincent). Fingerprints will host M. Ward, Al Jardine (of the Beach Boys)

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

CheckingInOn...

» SARAH BENNETT

The Growlers Prep for the Big Time

Last time we talked to Growlers singer Brooks Neilson ("Further? Fursure!" by Chris Ziegler, Dec. 23, 2011), his bandmates were gashing girls' heads on a small winter tour and waiting for the album they recorded in Nashville with Dan Auerbach (of the Black Keys) to find a release date.

The band are still waiting for that date, but that doesn't mean they're just hanging out. By the time you read this, they will have played their first set at Coachella and, hopefully, completed recording 20 more new songs on their and their friends' collections of all-analog devices. It's all about 2-inch tape, yo.

OC Weekly: *Since no release date has been announced for your new album, what are you doing in the meantime?*

Brooks Neilson: We just recorded three or four songs on 2-inch tape at home, and we're going to the Distillery [in Costa Mesa] to make another record on tape. It's all old analog—computers are not allowed inside that place. Mike McHugh is there, and he's a genius.

What's the best part about recording on tape?

There are a lot of people who push digital recording, but I've never heard anything come out good when recorded digital. Tape's just better stuff. All the records we grew up listening to and love are on tape, and it'll be a long time before they can figure out a computer that can create the sound waves that are like actual tape-sound recording. When you're at a computer, you can just say, "Go again," versus being in there with a bunch of dinosaur machines that you're trying to keep up on and tweak on and experiment on. The more you learn about it, the more you have respect for people who do film for movies and sounds for movies and old records. It's pretty incredible.

What made you want to record more material when you had just finished a new album?

Going out and doing the record in Nashville was great, as was having Dan [Auerbach] do all the work for it. But having someone else fix your album and not being able to be there made me jealous when I got home. We have a lot of material, so we just started recording, and we're going to crank out 25 songs before this month's over. I'm only five-deep right now, but it's totally doable.

How can you do that much recording if you're playing Coachella?

We'll be taking a break for Coachella because it's a big deal for a lot of people, and we definitely want to take advantage of the opportunity. But at the same time, I have to do what I want to do, and that's record. So I'll have to balance that out.

How does it feel to play your first Coachella?

Yeah, it's been a long time coming. We've become more approachable in the past few years, grown up a lot and gotten on the road more. For a long time, we were DIY, kicking around and never caring with our homemade recordings. We're all still in poverty, but now we're in control of our career. We all have fun, but we're not just fucking around. We're recording and writing and definitely are on the same level as any other band out there.

OC WEEKLY
ZONE PAGES

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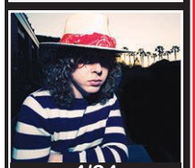
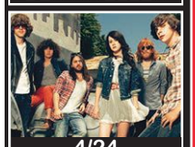
4/21 Y & T

4/22 ALLAN HOLDSWORTH


4/24 BEN KWELLER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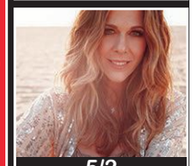
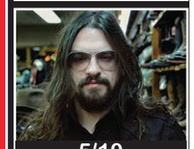
4/24 BEN KWELLER / SLEEPER AGENT
4/25 NATURAL VIBRATIONS
4/26 TED NUGENT / LAURA WILDE
4/27 ORANGE COUNTY'S FUNNIEST HOUSEWIVES
4/28 THE ULTIMATE STONES (Rolling Stones Tribute)
5/1 COMEDY NIGHT
5/2 RITA WILSON
5/4 JACK RUSSELL'S GREAT WHITE
5/5 LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM
5/6 AJ RAFAEL
5/10 SHOOTER JENNINGS
5/11 ERIC SARDINAS
5/12 HELLBOUND HAYRIDE / GRACELAND MAFIA
5/13 BODEANS
5/17 SPONGE performing "ROTTING PINATA"
5/18 ERIC HUTCHINSON / GRAFFITI6
5/23 HUGH LAURIE
5/24 DESTRUCTION / VITAL REMAINS
5/25 DREAD ZEPPELIN
5/26 ORANGE COUNTY'S FUNNIEST HOUSEWIVES
5/27 DANNY SERAPHINE'S CTA
5/29 JAMES MCCARTNEY
5/31 MARSHALL TUCKER
6/2 HONK
6/3 BIG SAM'S FUNKY NATION
6/7 PATO BANTON
6/8 QUEENSRYCHE'S GEOFF TATE (Acoustic)
6/9 THE TUBES
6/14 HENRY KAPONO
6/15 DONAVON FRANKENREITER

4/28 ROLLING THE STONES


5/2 RITA WILSON

5/4 JACK RUSSELL'S GREAT WHITE


5/10 SHOOTER JENNINGS

6/8 QUEENSRYCHE'S GEOFF TATE

6/14 HENRY KAPONO

UPCOMING SHOWS

6/16 DONAVON FRANKENREITER
6/17 RHETT MILLER & The Serial Lady Killers / The Spring Standards
6/21 CHERRY POPPIN' DADDIES
6/22 JANIVA MAGNESS
6/23 DSB (Journey Tribute)
7/7 DESPERADO
7/13 BILLY VERA & THE BEATERS
7/15 HOWARD JONES performing "Human's Lib" & "Dream Into Action"
7/21 MELVIN SEALS & JERRY GARCIA BAND
7/27 LOS RIOS ROCK SCHOOL
8/11 "HOLLYWOOD BABBLE-ON" with KEVIN SMITH and RALPH GARMAN
8/17 ABBA FAB (ABBA Tribute)
8/18 DICK DALE
8/30 HAPA
8/31 DAVID ALLAN COE
9/1 STEVE TYRELL
9/7 JOHN HIATT & THE COMBO
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THERE'S ALWAYS A BED FOR BEATLE JOHN IN RECORD STORES

MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS

Did Record Store Day Save Vinyl?

FROM PAGE 40

and more at an in-store performance. In past years, artists have done signings at Coachella pop-up shops.

"The first year wasn't a joke, but it's nothing compared to these past two to three years," says Drak, owner of Vinyl Solution in Huntington Beach. He says sales mirror that of the Christmas rush. "It's great for us, for the starving record-industry people. [Business] comes through 20 to 30 times better."

Drak says Vinyl Solution doesn't do much different on that day, despite the influx in sales. "Every fucking day of my life is Record Store Day," he says. "We're going to treat everyone the same way we do every day. I wish everyone would support independent companies every day, not just on some Internet holiday."

Both Drak and Evans expressed frustration with the way limited releases are distributed. Most record stores don't know how many of the special titles they're going to get from the batches they order until a day or two before. "I don't like telling my customers that," Drak says. "Any other day, I'll call and they'll say yes or no. On Record Store Day, they can't tell me."

But smaller record stores such as Black Hole will only get a fraction of the records they request, Evans says. "Whatever Amoeba deems they don't want, I might get or a record store that kisses ass might. If Amoeba spends $1,000 per week and I spend $200, who do you think is going to get all the stuff?"

Drak expressed a similar sentiment. "Fingerprints will drown me, and I will get pushed to the side," he says.

"The problem is they have to get engaged and push for what they want," Record Store Day co-founder Kurtz says. "Establish a relationship with a [distributor], maintaining a relationship year-round, not just on [Record Store Day]."

Evans has a problem with that solution. "So I'd have to buy from 30 different distributors year-round to make sure I get the four singles I want on Record Store Day? That doesn't even make sense," he says.

"I have such a niche audience; I only sell alternative or punk rock, and most of these labels only have two artists I'd carry anyway. So they want me to buy a bunch of records I wouldn't even sell anyway? That's stupid."

Black Hole doesn't see much of a rise in sales on Record Store Day. "I still have singles from last year no one bought," Evans says. "It isn't even worth the $2 or $5 markup on most of these releases."

Kurtz recommends making the customer excited. "It's about getting involved," he says. "What artists do you have lined up? Do you have a party? A lot of stores are just thinking, 'How can I get the releases?' You have to think about

> "So I'd have to buy from 30 different distributors year-round to make sure I get the four singles I want on Record Store Day? That doesn't even make sense."

how you make your customers special. It's like the Beatles song says: 'The love you take is equal to the love you make.'"

He said it takes some stores awhile to understand Record Store Day is an altruistic venture. "We make no money," he says. "They have to get over bitterness of the past."

Eventually, that day comes. "I've heard all the complaints and usually the record stores come around eventually and say, 'Thank you for doing this," Kurtz says. "It really helps my business.'"

That day came for Drak, despite his frustrations. "Thank God for all of the good stuff about Record Store Day," he says. "The only thing bad is that someone has to remind you there *is* a Record Store Day. I woke up since junior high and knew not to eat at McDonald's. It's 98 percent good, 2 percent bad."

The future of vinyl is with the kids who are going to buy them, says Evans. "They'll steal their uncle's Clash album and buy a turntable," he says. "They're going to buy a vinyl and a bottle of wine and have a date. They're the kids who are going to save it, not Record Store Day."

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Dawn of the Dead Quixote

DEAD QUIXOTE perform with the Oddfaces and the Echo and the Sound at the Prospector SteakHouse and Saloon, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach. Tues., 10 p.m. Free. 21+.

Dead Quixote began in the overactive brain of guitarist/vocalist Edgar Aguilasocho as a way to even out the torment from a recent breakup, as well as deal with the stress from an internship at an LA-based civil-rights organization at which he witnessed daily injustices. "I wanted to yell into a microphone," Aguilasocho recalls. "I needed to get all that off my chest."

Aguilasocho found his Sancho Panza in drummer Adam De Leon, who was seeking meaning after struggling with the disillusionment that comes from working a nine-to-five. It followed, then, that thrashing about in small clubs around OC seemed the proper thing to do. So that's what they did. They've since added bassist Dave Virginia, who has given the band some needed thump, groove and creative momentum. Currently, they're busy recording a follow-up EP to last year's debut, *Absurdity*.

OC Weekly: *Are you guys friends with Death Hymn Number Nine? You both have that "undead thrasher" thing happening.*

Edgar Aguilasocho: Can't say I've had the pleasure, but I'd be happy to meet them for tea.

What is the significance of Dead Quixote, anyway?

Aguilasocho: Don Quixote is a character that has always resonated with me—the old bag of bones who is driven by insanity and romanticism to leave his life of leisure and venture out to do some good. "Dead" because the world can't help but laugh. Once I came up with the name, the sound came naturally: dirty guitar, driving drums and lyrics that sound serious but are actually just long-winded jokes.

And the title of your first EP?

Aguilasocho: That's one of those long-winded jokes. In formal logic, "absurdity" basically means the same thing as a contradiction. After you derive a contradiction in a logical proof, you're allowed to derive anything. This is called the "principle of explosion." So, if Dead Quixote starts with absurdity as a premise, then necessarily, we are going to blow up.

Adam and Dave, before that first rehearsal, what did you envision the sound to be?

Adam De Leon: I expected the band to be riffy, and it still is. But then the first couple of times we jammed, we played some really cryptic stuff, some of which developed into parts of songs later on, and some of it was just in that moment.

Dave Virginia: Although the songs are fast and tight, I felt like there was a lot I could contribute as a bass player; I really heard a lot of stuff going on underneath that I could add, and that was a big part of the reason I was drawn to the band.

How has your approach changed since then?

Aguilasocho: We brought Dave onstage with us this year, and everything makes a lot more sense now.

De Leon: Our songs have become much more developed and dynamic. We will always have loud and fast songs, but from what I've gathered so far, people can appreciate songs that increase and decrease in volume and speed.

You guys make a lot of noise for just three people. What's your secret?

Aguilasocho: Lots of fuzz, lots of groove and lots of thuds.

What musicians or bands might you call influential to what you're doing?

Aguilasocho: Django Reinhardt, Miles Davis, Gogol Bordello, Queens of the Stone Age, and pretty much everyone on Sargent House or Rodriguez Lopez Productions. I just try to do a crappy version of what they do.

What's been the toughest thing for you as a newish band trying to win over fans and make a name for yourself?

Aguilasocho: All of us are pretty busy dudes. Dave and Adam work a bunch, and I'm finishing law school. It's pretty hard making new friends when you're only at a show long enough to play your set. We'll have more time to hang out in a few months. I promise.

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THE DUPP BROTHERS: Marine Room Tavern, 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027.
JD CRAWFORD & THE WESTERN CONTINENTALS: 8:30 p.m., free. The Harp Inn, 130 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa, 949-646-8855, www.harpinn.com.
KETTLEBLACK: 9 p.m., free. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.
PULP: 8 p.m., $50. Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, 877-283-6976, www.foxpomona.com.
TOYS THAT KILL; PINS OF LIGHT; KILLER DREAMER: The Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-438-3839, www.prospectorlongbeach.com.
TUNE-YARDS; ST. VINCENT; KEEP SHELLY IN ATHENS: The Glass House, 200 W. Second St., Pomona, 909-865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us.

FRIDAY, APRIL 20

BERLIN: 8 p.m., $22.50-$25. House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.
BLACK ELK; TOTIMOSHI: 9 p.m., $5. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.
COMMON SENSE: The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.
DEAD MEADOW: Don the Beachcomber, 16278 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, 562-592-1321, www.donthebeachcomber.com.
FADED 420 BBQ & SHOW, FEATURING EDDIE BOOZE; D-STRUTTERS; SAW RED; THY SQUID: 4 p.m., $4 before 8 p.m. The Rhythm Lounge, 245 Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-435-4288, www.rhythm-lounge.com.
RAILROAD TO ALASKA; JERAMIAH RED: 8 p.m., free. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

DANNY MAIKA: Stubrik's Steakhouse & Bar, 118 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-1290, www.stubriks.com.
FASTER PUSSYCAT; VIVA VALHALLA: 9 p.m., $15 at the door. The Juke Joint, 735 N. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-778-1397, www.thejukejointbar.com.
420 HANGOVER FESTIVAL: 7 p.m., $20. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, 714-957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.
POSSE ON BROADWAY, FEATURING THE ABANDONED POOLS; THE COLOURISTS: 7 p.m., free, www.posseonbroadway.com. Downtown Santa Ana Artists Village, 208 Spurgeon St., Santa Ana.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

TIJUANA DOGS: The Swallow's Inn, 31786 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-493-3188, www.swallowsinn.com.

MONDAY, APRIL 23

COSMIC SLOP: 9 p.m., free. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

BEN KWELLER: The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.
DEAD QUIXOTE: 9:30 p.m., free. The Prospector, 2400 E. Seventh St., Long Beach, 562-438-3839, www.prospectorlongbeach.com.
ROBU ON GUITAR: The Pike Bar & Fish Grill, 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

ROD FRIAS: 7 p.m., free. OC Tavern, 2369 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 949-542-8877.
SOTO BAND: 7:30 p.m. Kobe Japanese Steak House & Lounge, 3001 Old Ranch Pkwy., Seal Beach, 562-596-9969, www.kobebistro.com.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26

AN EVENING WITH RAY MANZAREK AND ROBBY KRIEGER: House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim.
JAPANTHER; RETOX; BOYS WHO SAY NO: Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.
SOLD OUT: TED NUGENT; LAURA WILDE: The Coach House, 33157 Camino Capistrano, Ste. C, San Juan Capistrano, 949-496-8930, www.thecoachhouse.com.

rock

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.com/backalleyfullerton. **Thu:** 9 p.m., '80s Enough, free.
DOLL HUT: 107 S. Adams St., Anaheim, 714-533-1286, www.myspace.com/newhut. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Hump Night, free.
MARINE ROOM TAVERN: 214 Ocean Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3027. **Tue:** 8 p.m., Beth Fitchet Wood Songwriters Showcase, free.
THE SLIDEBAR ROCK-N-ROLL KITCHEN: 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com. **Tue:** 9 p.m., '80s Night.
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jazz

BRIX WINE BAR: 16635 Pacific Coast Hwy., Sunset Beach, 866-357-2749, www.brix4wine.com. **Wed, Fri-Sun:** 8 p.m., Live Band.
BRUSSELS BISTRO: 222 Forest Ave., Laguna Beach, 949-376-7955, www.brusselsbistro.com. **Tue:** 7 p.m., Jennifer Hart & Llew Matthews, free. **Wed:** 8 p.m., Dave Goldberg & Duane Allen Trio.
RALPH BRENNAN'S JAZZ KITCHEN: 1590 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-776-5200, www.rbjazzkitchen.com. **Thu:** 6:30-10 p.m., Just the 2 of Us, free. **Fri-Sat:** 7 p.m., Kenny Sara & the Sounds of New Orleans, free.
SAVANNAH STEAK & CHOP HOUSE: 32441 St. of the Golden Lantern, Laguna Niguel, 949-493-7107, www.savannahchophouse.net. **Tue-Wed:** 6:30 p.m., Le Grand Barr.
STEAMERS JAZZ CLUB: 138 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-871-8800, www.steamerscafe.com. **Sun:** 8 p.m., Evan Stone's Jazz Jam, free.

blues

HARVELLE'S LONG BEACH: 201 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 310-395-1676. **Thu:** The Toledo Show. **Sat:** April 21, Vaud and the Villians. **Sun:** Captain Jeff & His Musical Chumbuckets. **Mon:** C-Gak. **Wed:** April 25, Whiteboy James and the Blues Express.
HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Rockin' the Blues, free.

dance

THE BUTTERFLY LOUNGE: 719 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-642-2243, www.butterflylounge.com. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Plus-sized Party, where the big girls and guys come to party with the people who love them, $10.
CANTINA LOUNGE: 2736 E. Nutwood Ave., Fullerton, 714-879-8094, www.cantinalounge.com. **Fri:** 10 p.m., Club Encore, $10. **Sat:** 10 p.m., Club Triio, $10.
CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Unzipped, girls, girls, girls. **Sun:** Sunday Funday, free. **Mon:** 9 p.m., Sin, with DJ Ernie Pearl. **Tue:** 9 p.m., Tipsy Tuesday.
THE EXECUTIVE SUITE: 3428 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-597-3884. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Boy's Room, hosted by TigerHeat and POPplanet, $6.
HAMBURGER MARY'S: 740 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-436-7900, www.hamburgermaryslb.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., The Doll House. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Super Doll House. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Club Lucky Wild Wednesdays, $5.
HEAT ULTRA LOUNGE: 321 W. Katella Ave., Ste. 214, Anaheim, 714-776-4328, www.heatultraloungeoc.com. **Thu:** 9 p.m., Taboo Thursdays. **Fri:** 9 p.m., Kore. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Exclusive, $10. **Sun:** 9 p.m., Cirque.
PIERCE STREET ANNEX: 330 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa, 949-646-8500, www.piercestreetonline.com. **Daily:** 9 p.m., DJ & Dancing, Top 40.
TAPAS FLAVORS OF SPAIN: 4253 Martingale Way, Newport Beach, 949-756-8194, www.tapasflavorsofspain.com. **Wed:** Joey Negro; Marques Wyatt.
TIME OUT TAVERN & NIGHT CLUB: 27822 Aliso Creek Rd., Aliso Viejo, 949-362-5919, www.timeoutsportsnightclub.com. **Tue-Sat:** DJs and Dancing. **Fri:** 7 p.m., Ashes to Funk.
XALOS BAR: 1160 N. Kraemer Blvd., Anaheim, 714-632-0390, www.xalosbar.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., X-Lounge, featuring DJ Santa Rosa.

country

GASLAMP RESTAURANT & BAR: 6251 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, 562-596-4718, www.thegaslamprestaurant.com. **Tue:** 5 p.m., Live Country Music, free.

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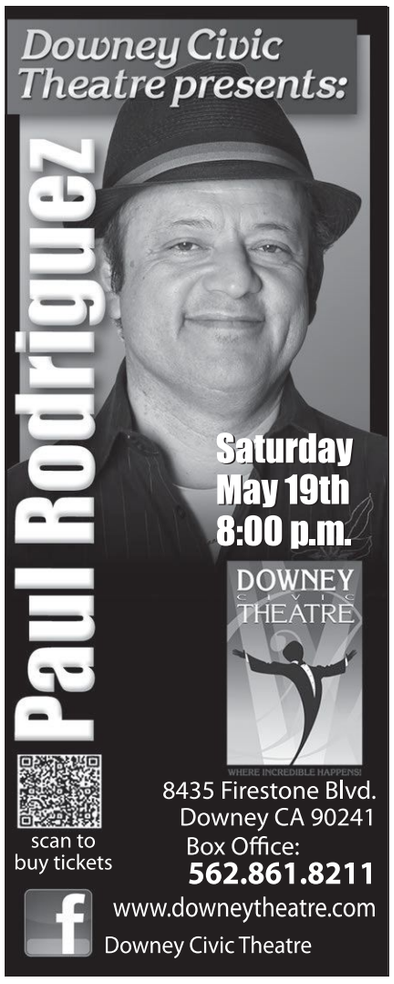

club*guide

THE SWALLOW'S INN: 31786 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-493-3188, www.swallowsinn.com. **Mon:** Country Dancin', with DJ Patrick.

reggae

DON THE BEACHCOMBER: 16278 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, 562-592-1321, www.donthebeachcomber.com. **Sun:** Fully Fullwood.

HOUSE OF BLUES: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, 714-778-2583, www.hob.com/anaheim. **Sat:** 9 a.m., Reggae Brunch, $12.95-$24.95.

MOZAMBIQUE: 1740 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, 949-715-7777, www.mozambiqueoc.com. **Sun:** 7 p.m., Reggae Sundays, free.

THE PUKA BAR: 710 W. Willow St., Long Beach, 562-997-6896, www.pukabar.com. **Tue:** 9 p.m., Rasta Tuesday, roots, rock and reggae, free.

STAR PARTY CRUISES: 140 Marina, Long Beach, 562-799-7000, www.reggaeboat.com. **Sat:** 6:30 p.m.; **Sun:** 12:30 p.m., Reggae Cruise, live reggae band, cash bar, barbecue, leaving Alamitos Bay landing in Long Beach, $45, 21+.

dj

AVALON BAR: 820 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, 949-515-4650, www.myspace.com/theavalonbar. **Tue:** 10 p.m., Solid State, free.

BACK ALLEY BAR & GRILL: 116 1/2 W. Wilshire Ave., Ste. C, Fullerton, 714-526-3032, www.myspace.com/backalleyfullerton. **Mon:** 8 p.m., DJ Souless, free.

COHIBA NIGHTCLUB AND CIGAR LOUNGE: 110 E. Broadway, Long Beach, 562-491-5220, www.cohibalongbeach.com. **Fri-Sat:** 9 p.m., Hip-hop, R&B, and Top 40, $20. **Mon-Tue:** 9 p.m., DJ, hip-hop, and R&B, free.

COMMONWEALTH LOUNGE: 112 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, 714-525-8888, www.commonwealthlounge.com. **Thu:** 5 p.m., Ladies' Night, with DJ Cocoe, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJ Lito.

KAVIKAS GRILL & BAR: 95 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-432-8700, www.kavikas.com. **Fri:** 9 p.m., After Dark Ultra Lounge, free.

KITSCH BAR: 891 Baker St., Ste. A10, Costa Mesa, 714-546-8580, www.kitschbar.com. **Tue-Thu:** 9 p.m., DJ 5 Disk, free. **Fri:** 9 p.m., DJ Anthony, free. **Sat:** 9 p.m., DJs Jon & Edwin, free.

LA CAVE: 1695 Irvine Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-646-7944, www.lacaverestaurant.com. **Wed:** 10 p.m., La Cave Wednesdays, with DJ Kedd Cook, free.

MAI TAI BAR: 97 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-435-1200, www.maitaibar.com. **Fri:** 9:30 p.m., Thank Goose It's Friday. **Sat:** 9:30 p.m., House Party.

MEMPHIS AT THE SANTORA: 201 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-564-1064, www.memphiscafe.com/santora/. **Wed:** 8 p.m., Dinner With Dave, free.

THE PIKE BAR & FISH GRILL: 1836 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, 562-437-4453, www.pikelongbeach.com. **Fri:** April 20, DJ Eser.

PROOF BAR: 215 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, 714-953-2660, www.proofbar.com. **Sun:** 9 p.m., Wreck Hall, free.

SUTRA LOUNGE: 1870 Harbor Blvd., Ste. 200, Costa Mesa, 949-722-7103, www.sutraoc.com. **Fri:** Sutra Friday.

TAPAS FLAVORS OF SPAIN: 4253 Martingale Way, Newport Beach, 949-756-8194, www.tapasflavorsofspain.com. **Tue:** 9:30 p.m., Focus Tuesdays, $15.

TIKI BAR: 1700 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, 949-548-3533, www.tikibaroc.com. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Upgrade Drum & Bass, free.

WOODY'S WHARF: 2318 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach, 949-675-0474, www.woodyswharf.com. **Thu:** 10 p.m., Action Thursdays, free.

drag

CLUB RIPPLES: 5101 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-433-0357, www.clubripples.com. **Thu:** 8 p.m., The Dreamgirls Revue.

latin

BRAVO NIGHT CLUB: 1490 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, 714-533-2291, www.clubbravo.com. **Fri:** 8 p.m., Metropolis, ladies free before 10 p.m. **Sat:** 9 p.m., Alternative Saturday. **Sun:** 11 p.m., El Chamber. **Wed:** 9 p.m., Splash.

SEVILLA NIGHT CLUB: 140 Pine Ave., Long Beach, 562-495-1111, www.sevillanightclub.com. **Mon:** 8 p.m., Monday Nights Is Banda.

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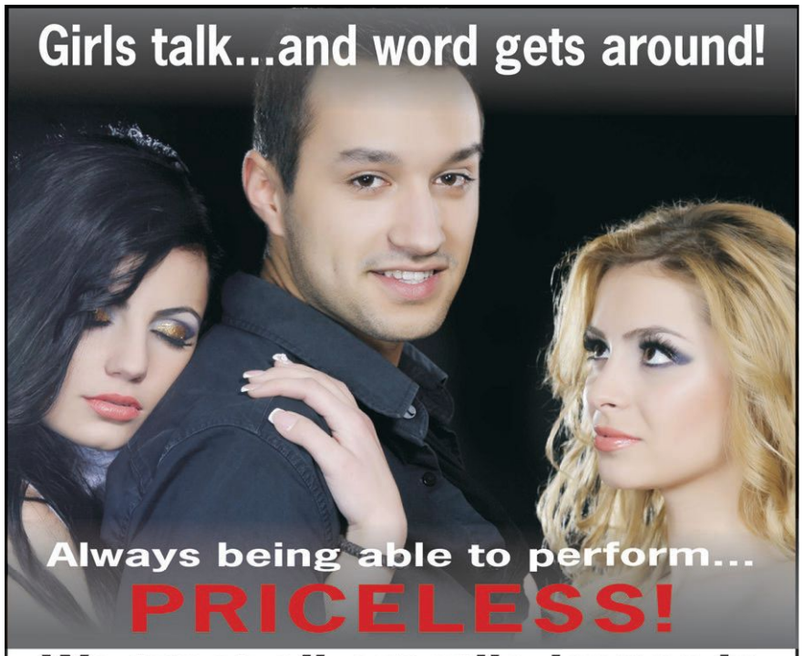

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savage love»

»DAN SAVAGE

I'm gay and a junior in high school, and I've had a boyfriend for a year. (He's one year older than me, Dan, so relax!) We are out to our parents, and everyone is supportive. We are not bullied or suicidal or using drugs. But we are frustrated! We had sex education in our schools, but they didn't cover gay sex. (Big surprise!) I tried to talk to my mom about gay sex, and all she said was "Please use condoms." We tried, and we used condoms, but I think we must be doing something wrong because we can't do it. We are ready to start having real gay sex—with me on the bottom, at least for now!—and we are frustrated and feel like failures as gay men. Any advice?

Tell Us Something Helpful

P.S. Do we really need to use condoms? We are both virgins and each other's first boyfriend.

You and your boyfriend aren't failing gayness.

Gay men and boys can be successes in life, in love and in the sack without acing—or even enjoying—anal intercourse. Anal doesn't define you as gay men, and it certainly isn't all there is to gay sex. There are so many ways you and your boyfriend can get off together—mutual masturbation, oral sex, frottage (a.k.a. "wet humping")—that are just as pleasurable, just as "real" and just as gay as anal intercourse. But if you and your boyfriend want to give anal another go, TUSH, here's a crash course in anal sex-ed . . .

First, experiment on your own. Use fingers and toys and lots of lube. I recommend you get your hands on a butt plug, get your ass on that butt plug, and get yourself off with that butt plug in your ass. Exploring anal penetration solo will allow you to experience anal pleasure without any pressure or expectations. You can really take your time, and you won't feel as though you're disappointing your boyfriend if you have to bail.

Your boyfriend should do the same. I don't care if your boyfriend is a top—or thinks he is, or is topping because you want to bottom—your boyfriend will be a better top if he knows what it feels like to be penetrated and enjoys penetration himself.

Okay! So you've both done some exploring on your own—jacked off with fingers and toys—and there you are, just you and your boyfriend, hanging out. Your butts are squeaky clean, and hey, you've got the house all to yourselves . . . is it time to fuck? Not yet. Now you're gonna spend some time sticking fingers and toys in your butts and jerking off together. For extra credit, you can experiment with rimming, if you haven't already, as nothing relaxes anal sphincters quite so effectively. (Once more with feeling: *squeaky-clean butts*!) The point is for you to do anal a few times with the boyfriend and for both of you to get off—you and the boyfriend—without his dick going anywhere near your ass.

Now you're ready to get fucked.

You're going to need lots of lube and lots of patience. Have your boyfriend apply lube directly to your hole; he should gently rub your hole for a bit to help it relax before using a finger or two to push some lube just inside you; you can apply the lube to his dick. Move into whatever position feels most comfortable for you—him on top, you on top, face-to-face, doggy-style—and point the tip of his hard cock directly at your hole. He should apply some pressure: uniform, constant, gentle pressure. You'll feel your asshole begin to open as the head of his cock enters you. Keep breathing as the rest of his dick slowly—a fraction of an inch at a time—slides into you.

Once he's all the way inside, your boyfriend may be tempted to start banging away, pornstar style, but that would be a huge mistake. Your boyfriend should instead stay perfectly still for the first minute or two while you breathe and relax. Kiss your boyfriend and stroke yourself during the brief lull before the fucking starts. Then he starts moving inside you—very slowly. He pulls out an inch or two and slides back in, you keep breathing and stroking, he pulls back an inch or two more and slides in. With each successive thrust, your boyfriend will be able to pull out a little farther, and before you know it, he'll be fucking the hell out of you. The whole process (the hole process?)—from patient foreplay to full-on assfucking—takes 30 minutes *at least*.

P.S. You don't *have* to use condoms, but you should. Using condoms is a good habit to get into, and if you have any concerns about cleanliness, well, a condom is your best friend. There are lots of gay guys out there—including guys as young as you—who got infected with HIV by boyfriends, including first boyfriends, who lied or didn't know or fucked up. So listen to your mother and use condoms along with a water-based lubricant.

I am an intern at the health-and-wellness center at my university. This is safe-sex-awareness month on campus. We got donations from some sex-toy companies. Among the products we received was something marketed as "Desensitizing Anal Wipes" by a company called California Exotic Novelties.

We gave away these samples at our recent expo. After the fair, a student came up to my boss and me. As a young gay man, he expressed concern that desensitizing anal wipes were not safe to use, as masking pain could in fact lead to engaging in activities that you may not otherwise. I am assuming that what he meant here is that if you are experiencing pain during anal sex, you probably shouldn't proceed. I know with anal you need to take things slow, use lots of lube and work your way up to it, but that's about the extent of my knowledge in this area. But I'd like to know what the Dan Savage take is on anal desensitizing wipes. Yay or nay?

A Sensitive Subject

Googling "desensitizing anal wipes" got me this: "perfect for using before anal sex to reduce friction pains and ease entry."

Anyone who's too stupid to use lube for anal sex—or anyone who *is* using lube but somehow doesn't realize that *reducing friction* and *easing entry* is what lube is down there to do—probably won't be harmed by a "desensitizing" moist towelette that retails for $3.99. I don't know what the active ingredient is, ASS, but I can't imagine it's a pharmaceutical-grade topical anesthetic. So I doubt that anyone who uses such a wipe is going to wind up with an ass so benumbed that he won't realize he's being torn to shreds until after he sees blood and santorum all over his sheets, pillows, walls, floor, boyfriend, ceiling, Xbox 360, cats, etc.

That said, desensitizing anal wipes play on common fears and misconceptions about anal sex—namely, that anal sex is supposed to hurt. Anal done right isn't painful, of course, even if it takes time, practice and some patience to get used to. Some people do experience discomfort when they first attempt anal, but *discomfort* isn't *pain*. It's important for people to understand that if anal sex hurts, they're doing it wrong—not enough lube, not enough foreplay, not enough practice—and they need to stop. Desensitizing wipes send the opposite message.

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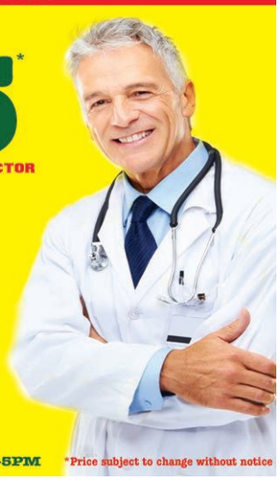

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THE TOP 5 SMOKER MOVIES

(IN MY HUMBLE OPINION)

By Gisele Gerry

Cannabis culture enthusiasts: it's understood the choices made here might ire you. Large quantities of potato chips were consumed in the quest to watch a wide variety of stoner movies, and these films were chosen based on their re-watchability, cannabis culture iconography, and of course, humor. Films are listed chronologically, and not in order of superiority. And no, "Up in Smoke" isn't on here. That shit's 40 years old – get with it.

FRIDAY

"I know you don't smoke weed. I know this. But Im'ma get you high today."

Friday speaks to the gangster in all of us. This film is laced with references to West Coast gangster rap culture: hip hop music, drinking '40's, smoking blunts and dealing with the occasional drive by. Straitlaced Craig loses his job, and spends a day with his buddy who tries to get him stoned. But the best part about Friday is that we're introduced to Smokey, a character that lays down the stoner etiquette we all still abide by today: "Don't fuck up the rotation! It's puff puff give man!"

HALF BAKED

"You have smoked yourself retarded."

Some might call this film "The Stoner Bible." This movie shouts from the rooftops how celebratory of cannabis culture it is. It's in this film we're first introduced to the various types of smokers there are out there: the "I'm only creative if I smoke" smoker, the "MacGuyver" smoker and of course, your "Scavenger" smoker. We're shown the nuances of selling weed, turf wars with other dealers, the list can go on and on. This film introduced us to Dave Chappelle, a prophet straight out of the Stoner Bible for sure. Thurgood Jenkins (Chappelle) and his group of friends hatch a half-baked idea to bail out their buddy when one of them ends up in jail. Oh, and Thurgood falls in a love with a chick actually named Mary Jane. See what we mean about being celebratory of the culture?

HAROLD & KUMAR GO TO WHITE CASTLE

"Dude, we're so high right now!"
"We're not low."

This film may be the stoner equivalent to The Wizard of Oz. Two "not low" friends go questing for their perfect food, while meeting an interesting cast of characters along the way. This movie is awesome whether you watch it high or not – you want these guys to get those tiny burgers so badly it gives you the meat sweats. It's a gritting, accurate portrayal of the ultimate stoner dilemma: what to eat?!

GRANDMA'S BOY

"My grandma drank all my pot."

Who doesn't love an underdog? Alex gets kicked out of his apartment and winds up living with his Grandma and her two bat shit crazy roommates. He somehow manages to beat the villain, succeed at work, get the girl, and does it all while massively high the entire time. Grandma's Boy is the first of its kind that brings together the subcultures of gaming and cannabis. This movie makes you want to fire up your X-Box and something else.

SMILEY FACE

"This is a story of how a person got from Point A to Point Z."

For all the movies that feature smoking weed as a main plot point, a surprising few star women. Smiley Face wins points for not only starring the hilarious Anna Faris, but for the most accurate portrayal of someone when high. It's a simple plot: Stoner Jane eats her roommates' magic cupcakes, doesn't realize they're pot cupcakes, gets massively high and hijinks ensue. Just watching this movie makes you feel high. Which is awesome.

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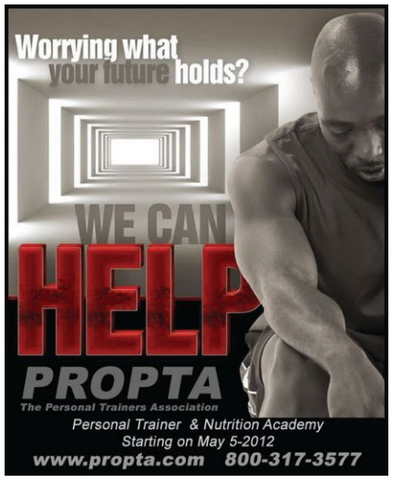

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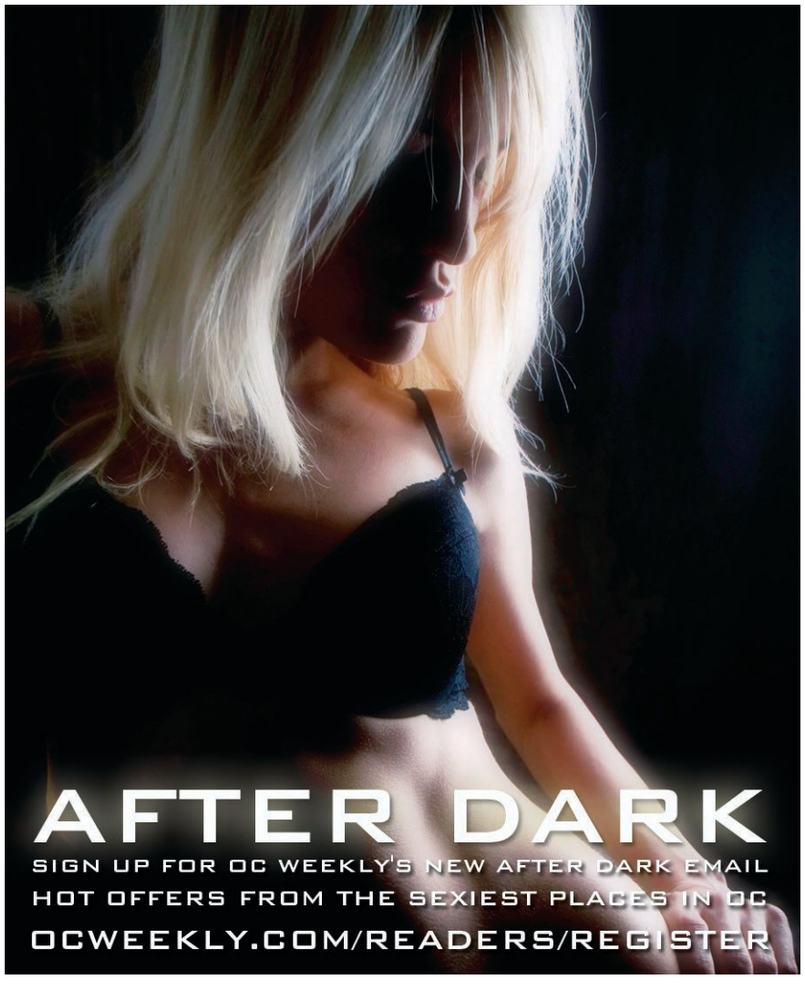

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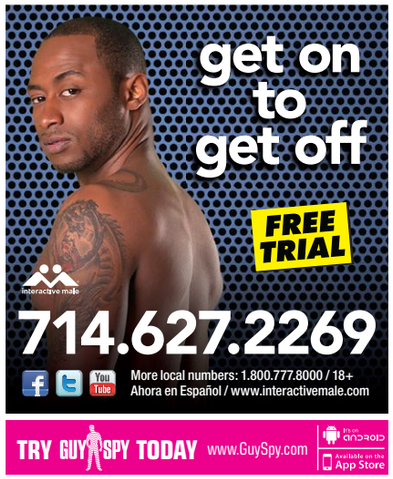

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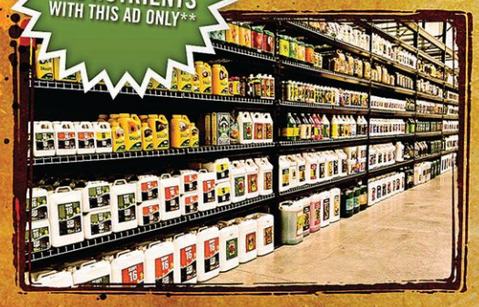

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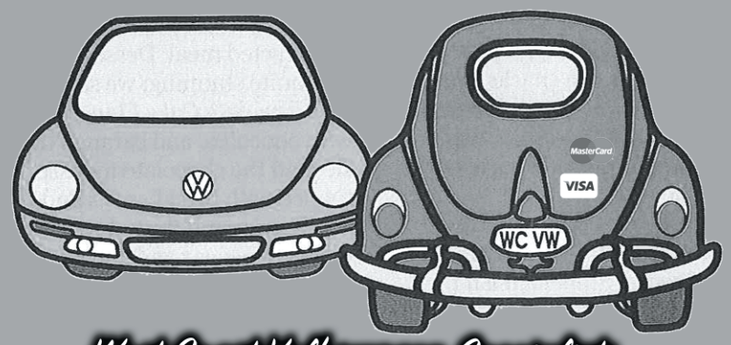

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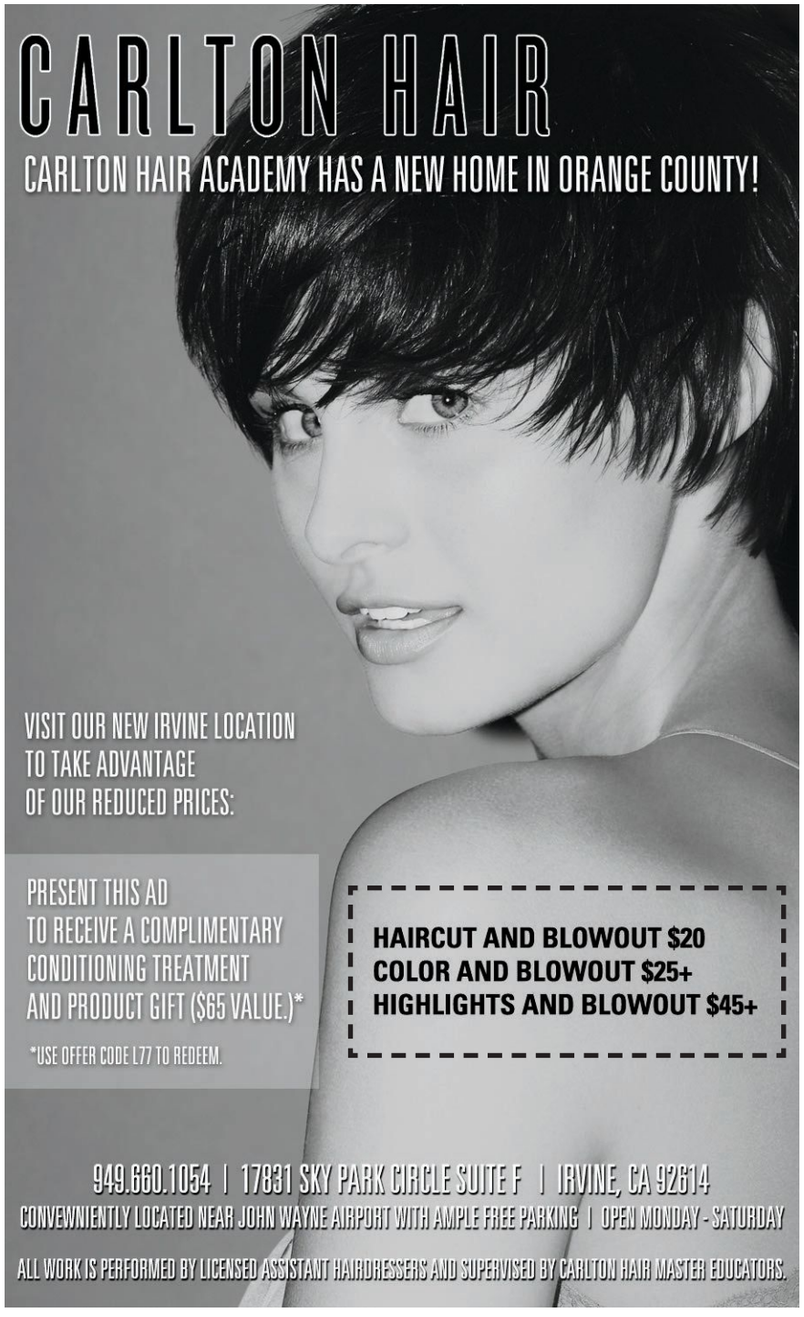

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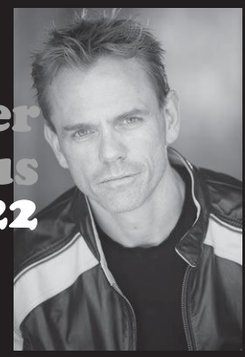

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